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AMONG UNKNOWN ESKIMO



A WOMAN OF THE FOX CHANNEL TRIBE.

With jacket splendidly worked in beadwork. Her husband has obtained the beads by barter from whaling ships.

AMONG UNKNOWN ESKIMO

AN ACCOUNT OF TWELVE YEARS INTIMATE RELATIONS
WITH THE PRIMITIVE ESKIMO OF ICE-BOUND
BAFFIN LAND, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF
THEIR WAYS OF LIVING, HUNTING
CUSTOMS & BELIEFS

BY

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WITH THIRTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP

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PREFACE

IN offering the present book on the Eskimo tribes of the Arctics to the reading British public, I must discharge the grateful and pleasing duty of acknowledging my indebtedness for much courtesy and documentary assistance to the Canadian Government, in the person of F. C. C. Lynch, Esq., Superintendent of the "National Resources Branch of the Department of the Interior." He has been zealously instrumental in enabling me to consult sources of classic recent information of which otherwise I should not have had the confirmation and the benefit, and also has placed at my publishers' disposal the section of the official map which represents the most up-to-date geographical information about Baffin Land.

There is a considerable literature about the Eskimo (as distinct from a quite formidable list of works dealing with travel and voyages in the Arctics) which should be consulted by students of ethnography.

The classical authorities in this department are Dr Franz Boas and Dr Rink, a study of whose researches should underlie all the more recent first-hand contributions to what must remain for a long time to come a new subject.

For the photographs I am greatly indebted to the Rev. A. L. Fleming, L.T.H., who spent several years among the Eskimo of South Baffin Land. His photos were taken during many intrepid journeys in those wilds, and he knew exactly the scenes it was desired to record by photography in this work. I am also indebted to Miss A. B. Teetgen for her assistance in the literary construction of the book.

Finally, I wish to record my admiration and respect for the genial and brave Eskimos of those barren lands, and for the way they face and overcome the difficulties of the Arctic wilds.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
THE VOYAGE TO THE ARCTICS	17
CHAPTER II	
BAFFIN LAND	32
CHAPTER III	
ARCTIC FLORA & FAUNA	47
CHAPTER IV	
THE ESKIMO	56
CHAPTER V	
THE BUILDING OF THE VILLAGE	72
CHAPTER VI	
THE SEALING GROUNDS	85
CHAPTER VII	
WOMANHOOD IN THE ARCTICS	97
CHAPTER VIII	
CLOTHING—BOAT BUILDING	108
CHAPTER IX	
ESKIMO DOGS	119
CHAPTER X	
TRIBAL LIFE	136
CHAPTER XI	
TRIBAL LIFE— <i>continued</i>	154
CHAPTER XII	
THE ESKIMO LANGUAGE	171

	PAGE
CHAPTER XIII	
LEGENDS	184
CHAPTER XIV	
THE CONJURORS	196
CHAPTER XV	
THE SEDNA CEREMONY	210
CHAPTER XVI	
THE NATIVE SURGEON	224
CHAPTER XVII	
SPORT & HUNTING	235
CHAPTER XVIII	
THE CREATURES OF THE WILD	252
APPENDIX	265
INDEX	271

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A WOMAN OF THE FOX CHANNEL TRIBE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
AN ANCIENT ABORIGINAL ENCAMPMENT	PAGH 40
PART OF AN ESKIMO TRIBE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN	56
AN IGLOVEGAK OR ESKIMO DWELLING	64
AN ESKIMO TUPIK	73
AN ESKIMO SNOWHOUSE	76
AN ESKIMO HOME	80
THE RETURN OF THE SUCCESSFUL SEAL HUNTER IN SPRINGTIME	88
YOUNG SEAL HUNTING IN MAY	92
TWO WOMEN IN SUMMER DRESS	96
A YOUNG WIFE WITH HER BABY IN HER HOOD	104
ESKIMO FAMILY GROUP	104
MODELS OF KAYAK, UMIK, AND OKUSHUK	112
AN ANCIENT FORM OF SLED	134
THE TWO WIVES OF A HUNTER	144
AN ESKIMO FAMILY OUTSIDE THEIR HOUSE	144

	PAGE
PREPARING FOR A LONG WINTER JOURNEY . . .	160
A NATIVE CHART	177
ASSEAK AND HIS WIFE	200
AN UMIAC OR FAMILY BOAT	208
A CONJUROR'S MASK	211
A KAGGE OR SINGING HOUSE (ELEVATION) . . .	218
A KAGGE OR SINGING HOUSE (PLAN)	219
AN ESKIMO WOMAN OF THE FOX CHANNEL TRIBE . .	224
AN ESKIMO SUMMER ENCAMPMENT	224
SPECIMENS OF NATIVE STONE CARVING	232
AN ESKIMO IN HIS KAYAK	240
BEGINNING TO BUILD A SNOWHOUSE	240
A WOLF TRAP	255
AN ESKIMO TRAP FOR BEARS, FOXES OR WOLVES .	257
A SEAGULL TRAP	261

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**The legends to illustrations facing pages 40 and
88 have been transposed.**



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The Eskimo of Baffin Land

CHAPTER I

THE VOYAGE TO THE ARCTICS

A VOYAGE to the Arctics has always been a dangerous and exciting adventure, whether entered upon by whalers and hunters, intrepid men lured by the hardy business of the frozen North, or by the no less intrepid pioneers of exploration and of science. For the moment, we are not concerned with the latter, but rather with some aspects of life in the barren lands and icy seas north of "the Circle," and with the adventures and experiences of the few ships' crews who have been making yearly voyages in those regions for trading purposes ever since the efforts of the sixteenth century navigators to discover the famous North West Passage began to chart out these hitherto unnavigated seas.

The search, indeed, for this passage, a sea route of communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (or, in other words, a short way to the East Indies without doubling the Cape of Good Hope)—was incidentally the means of opening up the whole of the north polar regions to exploration and discovery. As early as the year 1527, the idea of such a

passage was suggested to Henry VIII by a merchant of Bristol; but it was not until the beginning of the following century that a first expedition was fitted out at the expense of some London merchants and despatched to the arctic seas.

Centuries before this, however, the Arctic Ocean was entered by a Norwegian adventurer about the time of King Alfred; and the west coast of Greenland was colonised from Iceland early in the eleventh century. But no further progress was made in arctic discovery until the sixteenth century, when various seas and points of land were mapped out, mainly in the eastern hemisphere. The navigator Henry Hudson discovered the Straits and Bay named after him in the great North American archipelago, in 1610. Frobisher, Drake, and Hall, made voyages to the west coasts of Greenland and to the opposite coasts; but the entrance to the arctic regions west of that continent was discovered by John Davis in 1585. In 1616, Baffin and Bylot passed through this passage and sailed up Smith Sound, but nothing further was learned of these parts for another two hundred years.

The Eskimo preserve to this day the story of Frobisher. It was, indeed, narrated to the writer with a wealth of authentic detail by a native, to whom it had been handed down amid other oral traditions of his tribe and locality.

“Now it is said that Frobisher, coming to *Nauyatlik* for the first time, not knowing the place or where there was a safe anchorage, crept along the

side (of the land) in his small ship, and was wrecked. For it was shallow water there, and getting aground, he ordered the fuel (coal) to be taken out and carried ashore to a place called *Akkelasak*. For the ship was no longer habitable. The crew found refuge on a small, flat island, and pitched tents there of the vessel's sails, and began to fashion a graving dock by digging out the soft ground. When it was finished, they towed the wreck to the spot and docked her. All this happened a long time ago, but traces of their work are still visible. The shipwrecked sailors overhauled the hull. When at length their repairs and rebuilding were complete, they towed out the ship and moored her alongside a cliff, at the top of which they fixed their tackle, unstepped and resteped the mast, their task being completed. At last, and having buried those of their shipmates who had died during this weary time, they abandoned the remainder of their fuel and set sail for home. This is the narrative of one who had it from her mother, who in turn had received it from her dead father, who had it from his forbears; for thus they were accustomed to narrate it."

The above translation, of course, is very free. It would interest the philologist to have it in the original, or even in a literal version; but possibly the foregoing will convey to the general reader that graphic grasp of the story which renders all Eskimo history so reliable and enduring.

The attempt to find a north west passage by sea,

from the Atlantic Ocean to Behring Strait, where farthest east meets farthest west, was abandoned until Commander John Ross, in modern times (1818), was sent out to prosecute further exploration in the Arctic. Throughout the nineteenth century, many intrepid voyages were made, with which the names of such men as Parry, Ross, Richardson, Rae and Franklin are associated. Prior to this wonderful epoch of dauntless adventure, all within the Arctic Circle upon the map was a blank. The entire geography of the Canadian arctic archipelago has been worked out, defined, charted, and named, since that time. Voyages of discovery were made in rapid succession, after Sir John Ross's expedition in 1818, many of the leaders working in conjunction with the officials of the Hudson Bay Fur Trading Company, who were anxious to determine the extent and limits of the immense continent they controlled, now known as the North West Territories. Every name upon the arctic map, whether of sea, sound, inlet, strait, island, peninsula or cape, is a historical association with the personnel or the patrons of these numerous expeditions.

All the islands of the Arctic Archipelago lying to the northward of the mainland of the continent, and the whole of Baffin Land, form part of the British possessions in North America by right of discovery. They were formally transferred to the Dominion of Canada by Order in Council of the Imperial Government on September 1st, 1880.

An immense amount of scientific information was derived from all this hardship, endurance and enterprise. The story of Sir John Franklin alone is a deathless epic in the annals of this seafaring nation. And the whole field was opened up for the whalers, sealers, hunters and fishers, whose business it soon became to demonstrate that arctic exploration had a bearing on commerce and the hardier industries of maritime mankind.

The whaling trade originated as early as the discoveries of Barentz and Hudson, but Sir John Ross opened up the northernmost waters of Baffin's Bay to it, in recent times. The search for the North West Passage, indeed, proved abortive for many years, owing to the fact that the season in which it was possible to navigate in very high latitudes only lasted about seven weeks. The most experienced men, though, never gave up the theory of the probability of its existence. Half a century went by before the route was found at last. Captain McClure, in the search for the long-lost Franklin, achieved the discovery of two routes to the Behring Straits and the Pacific Ocean, in the autumn of the year 1850. Useless and futile as the discovery proved to be, who can sufficiently estimate and appraise all that has gone, of human worth and high resolve, of suffering and of life itself, to the making of it?

Of the whalers and traders who followed in the wake of the explorers, the Scottish seamen have been the most persistent. Scotch vessels continue, to-day,

to visit the Arctic every year. They sail from home in early summer, cross the North Atlantic, work their way up Davis' Strait, and, (unless they winter on the coast of Baffin Land or Greenland), return to Scotland late in "the fall." Sometimes the practice was to make the passage, generally through open water, from Dundee to St. John's, spend some weeks upon the sealing grounds, then return to refit at the Newfoundland port for a whaling cruise farther north in Lancaster Sound. Having secured their cargo of seal skins and oil, they return home. The vessels of the Dundee whaling fleet are designed and built for navigation in northern seas. The hull is of wood, on account of its resisting power where pressed by ice, and the hardwood ("greenheart") sheathing minimises the abrasions caused by conflict with the jagged edges of the floes. The ship is immensely braced by stout cross beams inside. The cutwater is protected by iron bands or plates, to enable her to withstand the heavy strain of the ice. She is barque rigged (i.e., a square rigged vessel, having yards on the foremast and mainmast, but not on the mizzen mast), and fitted with steam, to enable her to proceed during a calm, to shear her way through ice, or to enter and leave harbour independently of wind or tide. On all other occasions she depends upon her sails. A whaler fitted after this fashion is called an "auxiliary steam vessel." She sails, however, much faster than she can steam. She carries about 500 tons of coal.

Many of these tried and tested Scottish whaling ships have been bought up by the leaders of Arctic and Antarctic exploring expeditions, and remodelled and refitted for the scientific uses to which they would be put, and have done yeoman service in the assault on the Poles.

Of late years the Hudson Bay Company (of historic and ubiquitous enterprise in Canada), have established posts on the southern shores of Baffin Land, (opposite to that northernmost region of the bleak Labrador known as Ungava), so that their ships, which sail from Montreal as annual supply ships for all the Company's "Forts" and "Factories" along the Canadian coasts, have points of call along Hudson Strait en route for Hudson Bay itself and the fur ports of that vast inland sea.

The Scotch whaling industry has various agents posted in many a bleak, un-heard of spot along the icebound littoral of the Eskimo countries, whose duty it is to collect and store the pelts brought in by the natives—employed by the agent—and ship them away annually or bi-annually, as the case may be.

A whaling voyage was filled, especially in the earlier days, with as much danger as adventure. The ships were manned by sailors who had taken to the life as lads, or, held by the fascination of the North, returned thither year after year, seldom caring to make voyages elsewhere. They lived amid the ice. True northman and fine seaman, many a whaler's master is proud of the fact that he began his career

as a cabin boy and worked his way aft. He is a fighter, every inch of him, such as only "the wild" can breed. He has an iron code of honour, and a strain of true Norse hardness in him for his enemy. But he has also the manly virtues of his type—fidelity to his fellows, and generosity to lesser men than himself.

Previous to an Arctic voyage, months were spent in the commissioning of these vessels. Every rope and block was overhauled. The ships' boats were rigorously tested and each carefully fitted out. Food and stores of all kinds were taken aboard wholesale, against every contingency experience and foresight could suggest, especially that of a forced wintering in the north. An armoury of weapons was carried: harpoons and harpoon guns for the boats, lances for killing whales, huge knives for cutting up the carcases, bombs, hatchets, rifles and ammunition. No less exhaustive was the inventory of the "trade"—articles for the Eskimo trade and barter—such as needles, soaps (scented and otherwise), pipes, matches, calico, beads, and, above all, tobacco! Every boy's book of adventure will suggest the scope of the slop chest, the incredible handiness and nattiness of the galley, the reek of the fo'c'sle, the snug dignity of the Captain's cabin, and the compressed completeness of an equipment designed to last a ships' entire crew (let us say her tonnage is about 129, and her company number twenty-nine) over many months of toil, emergency, and utter isolation.

She carried no doctor. The first mate presided over the medicine chest, and had resort to some small book of directions as to what to give and what to do in case of illness or accident. In the early days adventurers to the Arctic were sorely stricken with scurvy, for want of vegetable food and a knowledge of how to provide against this deficiency. We have often heard of desperate feats of amateur surgery carried out on board ship. It has been that the mate of a whaling vessel often acted, not at all unsuccessfully, as surgeon.

Doctor William S. Bruce, indeed, tells us in his "Polar Exploration" that, generally speaking, germ diseases are unknown in the Arctic, the intense cold making everywhere—in the air, on the sea and on the land—for a high degree of bacterial sterility. "Under ordinary conditions it is not possible to 'catch cold' in the polar regions . . . infectious fevers are practically unknown, unless contracted in a dirty ship or filthily kept house." Hence the feasibility of a practical asepsis in accident or operation. Bishop Bompas once amputated a man's leg above the knee, and the operation was completely successful. The Bishop had no medical knowledge beyond having attended some lectures at an ophthalmic hospital, in order to learn how to treat his Indians for snow-blindness.

The whaling voyage itself might be uneventful enough until a high latitude was reached; but after that, the greatest possible skill was required to navi-

gate the ship safely through the "pack" ice coming down from the Pole through Davis Straits and Fox Channel, on its way to the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland, to be finally melted and dispersed in the Gulf Stream.

Arctic navigators and oceanographers enumerate many varieties and vagaries of the polar ice. Suffice it here to note that "pack ice" is the jammed and frozen conglomeration of masses of ice from broken floes and vast disintegrating "fields" of ice. In Straits, this pack is always heaviest in the centre but less compact along the shores, so that a vessel can sometimes be worked along the coast when navigation in the middle would be impossible. This "middle pack" is rightly dreaded by Arctic seamen. A change of wind might drift it in upon the shore, when the ship's destruction would be inevitable. The great danger in meeting the ice pack out at sea consists in the fact that the larger part of the floe is almost submerged and little of it is to be seen. Again, it bristles with spurs and points which stick up and out like spears and rams, any one of which might rip up a hull sailing at any speed.

The rapidity with which the ice pack moves is something wonderful. Miles upon miles of sea will be free from ice, with the exception of small masses from the floes, and the ship ploughs a steady course to the north. Suddenly the wind changes. Ice swiftly makes its appearance on every quarter, and—with incredible rapidity—the vessel is surrounded. But

warning has been given from the "crow's nest" (the look-out aloft, a barrel at masthead), and the Master works a cautious way through the "leads" in the shifting ice. Should the pack be exceptionally heavy, threatening to pen in the ship completely, measures for her safety are immediately taken. Orders ring out sharply. The crew, with ice saws or blasting powder, quickly make a space in the ice, like a temporary dock, large enough to warp her into, where she can lie snug while the savage floes grind and crash against each other without. Woe to the ship caught between them ere such a refuge can be made! No vessel that ever adventured in the polar seas could stand the awful grip. There would be a rending of the stoutest timbers, groans of a ship in agony, a lift and a quiver, and as the floes swung apart on the black swell below, the brave creature, mangled, rent, and stove in, would plunge to her bitter grave. As for her crew, their only chance would be to lower the boats, and, either marooned on the ice, drift south on the prevailing current until perchance sighted by a ship; or, if afloat, work their perilous way to the Greenland coast, and take refuge at one of the Danish settlements sparsely scattered on its southern extremity.

Icebergs—those rightly dreaded wanderers of the northern seas—afford a glorious vision in bright, calm weather, as they wend their majestic course to the south, tinted by the setting sun or by the indescribable loveliness of the northern sunrise. Some-

times a large portion having been melted, breaks from the berg, when the vast mass slowly careens over, plunges with a thunderous crash, and reasserts itself upon a new floating base, peerless and beautiful as ever. The ship is fortunate who finds herself standing well away at such a moment.

In spite, however, of their bad reputation, the bergs have their uses for those hardy wayfarers of the sea who know them. The ancient Arctic mariner will tell you that an iceberg can sail against the wind as well as with it! Gripped for two-thirds of its bulk by a strong under-current, it can crash its way and forge ahead against the wildest adverse gale. An old whaler told of an experience he had when his ship was beset by the loose floe, and like to be crushed to matchwood. The men were striving all they knew to get her into safety, when a vast berg drove slowly down beside her through the ice, shouldering it aside as a giant liner drives through a heavy sea. With the inspiration of sheer desperation, the Captain saw his chance! The vessel was cautiously worked still nearer the berg and then kedged on to it. Towed thus, with resistless might, she too forged safely through the chafing floe to clear water and deliverance.

Again, a ship—no matter of what class or tonnage—can only carry a certain quantity of water. So, too, with a whaler; she is limited in her supply. It sometimes happens that, cruising about week after week, she runs short of water. On sighting an ice-

berg, she sends off her boats loaded with casks, and the crews refill them either with water from the pools at the foot of the berg, or with the ice itself, which being fresh water ice, melts down, of course, into splendid drinking water after the brine and salt coating from the sea has first been scraped off. For, be it remembered, an iceberg is a portion—the seaward end—of one of the polar glaciers. As the immense ice river reaches the coast it is pushed out over the cliffs, and vast masses break off with terrific detonation, plunge into the sea, and the newly born icebergs go floating far and wide. A large number of these bergs are formed in Eternity Fiord on the Greenland coast, and the crash and roar of them can be heard for miles.

As the season wears on and the whaler's hold slowly fills with the cargo of the Arctic hunt, from time to time she puts into the sparse harbours of the northern coasts, to refit, or to meet the tribes of Eskimo gathered there to do "trade" with her. The Hudson Bay Company have lately introduced a form of coinage for this purpose, anything of the sort being previously quite unknown among the natives. Pieces of metal in various shapes represent the values of a currency and are used as money. But the prehistoric marketing of barter still holds good throughout the greater part of the Arctic regions.

Sometimes a shipmate has to be left, perforce of accident or illness, to sleep the long sleep that knows no earthly waking, in this drear and far-off land.

So much then for the voyage and the voyagers to the Arctic. Now for that frozen world itself, and for those strange people whose lot, compared with that of all the rest of the more genially situated sons of men, would seem to have fallen in the bleakest, harshest and most forbidding places, where human life might scarcely exist.

When the first ship seen by an Eskimo tribe touched on the coast, what did they think of it; what was the bewildering impression they got? An old hunter, recounting the story of his tribe and its adventures, gave the writer a graphic account of just such an event. An enormous boat, he said, appeared, filled with *Kabloonâtyet* (strangers), speaking an unknown tongue and having hairy faces! The tall masts were hung with the clouds (sails), and there was a door in the roof (the companion leading from the deck), instead of in the side of the house. At first the tribesmen hovered round this amazing thing in their canoes, afraid to approach too near. Presents were thrown out to them of which they could make nothing. They just smelt at the tobacco, biscuit and sweets, and cast them aside. There were knives, but they cut themselves with these, not knowing how to handle steel ones. It was almost as if some unimaginable craft from another sphere were to visit the Earth and make incomprehensible overtures to us by means of objects which conveyed nothing to our intelligence—something after the style of Mr. Wells's Martians. At last, however, looking glasses resolved the situation.

These the Eskimo received with huge delight and amazement. Eventually they were induced to board the strange boat and open up some sort of initial overtures with her alarming crew. His fore-fathers, said the old hunter, had seen these things and carefully handed them down.

CHAPTER II

BAFFIN LAND

A LANDFALL in the Arctics is forbidding enough. Little is to be seen save bare rocks broken by ravines, filled with snow even so late as far into July and August—bare rocks, rising into gaunt hills from 500 to 1,500 feet high. The coastline is broken by bays and fiords, running deep inland. These inlets with their irregular outlines have a singular if rather drear beauty of their own, especially in the summer-time, when what little vegetation there may be—a spare, coarse grass and a red and white variety of heather—adds a grateful note of relief to the severe scene. There are miles and miles of rocky coast in places, where not so much as a handful of soil to support the hardiest little living thing could be found.

Baffin Land, or Baffin Island—the country with which this book has to do—is an immense portion of the Canadian Arctic archipelago lying between latitude 62° and 72° N. By far the greater part of it extends north of the Arctic Circle, while its southernmost cape touches the latitude of the Faroe Islands, 'twixt the Shetlands and Iceland, in our own more

familiar waters. The whole country lies far beyond the northernmost limit of trees, although it is not without an Arctic flora of its own. Baffin Sea, or Baffin Bay (that stretch of the North Atlantic Ocean which, beyond Davis Strait, divides the west coast of Greenland from North America), was discovered by the navigator William Baffin in 1615. Hence the name of the country. Discredit was thrown throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on Baffin's work in the north; and, after him, Arctic exploration ceased for about two centuries. Then Sir John Ross verified Baffin's observations in 1818, and many of them became the bases of later expeditionary enterprise.

A glance at the map shows how the country lies. To the north of it, beyond the whaling grounds of Lancaster Sound, Devon Island is the next stretch of the poleward tapering continent. The Gulf of Bothnia and Fox Channel divide it on the west from the enormously broken coasts of the North West Territories. "The territory now known as Baffin Land was, until about 1875, supposed to consist of different islands, known as Cockburn Island, Cumberland Island, Baffin's Land, Sussex Island, Fox Land, etc. It seems to be now established that these are all connected and that there is but one great island, comprising them all, to which the name of Baffin Land has been given. It forms the northern side of Hudson Strait. . . . It has a length of about 1,005 English statute miles, with an average breadth of 305

miles, its greatest width being 500 and its least 150 miles. Its area approximates 300,000 square miles, and it therefore comprises about one tenth of the whole Dominion. It is the third largest island in the world, being exceeded only by Australia and Greenland" (Annual Report of Geolog. Survey of Canada, 1898.)

It is an entirely Arctic country, immediately north of which runs the polar limit of human habitation.

Up to the actual time of writing, Baffin Land has been held to be incapable of inland commercial development, but a Royal Commission of the Government of the Dominion have recently examined the possibility of establishing there a reindeer and musk-ox ranching industry. Their report has not yet been published, but already some steps are being taken to realise such a project. If this should have results, a new means of livelihood would be opened up to the Eskimo, at present employed exclusively by the whaling agents on the coast. But the natives are not herders, and in all probability Lapps would be brought over from northern Europe to initiate the industry. From this would ensue doubtless some racial modifications—probably quite inappreciable to any but those observers, like the present writer, used to the pure and unmixed Eskimo stock. In the present book, little account will be taken of those tribes which have been in contact with other races, like those of Alaska and Labrador, whence results hybridization or degeneration. The writer proposes to confine his atten-

tion entirely to the people of ancient, unmixed blood, and to depict their life and customs as uninfluenced by the forces of trade and civilisation, which are already threatening to usher in a new era and extinguish the last representatives of the "reindeer age."

From another point of view, however, Baffin Land should not pass without remark. It has certain undetermined mineral resources. At Cape Durban, on the 67th parallel, coal is known to exist, and graphite (plumbago) has been found abundant and pure in several islands. Again, pyrites and mica are all to be found in its rocks.

The geology of the Arctic regions is, of course, a study in itself beyond the scope of this book. It may be of interest, however, to note that the two great distinctive bodies of rock to be observed in a country like Baffin Land are the granite and the finer grained, darker, basic rock. The ironstone from there is very similar to that brought from India to be smelted in England. The graphite might be mistaken for coal, but for its formation under geological conditions which could not have given rise to the latter. The two pyrites occur in the rocks of all ages; the one is a brassy yellow, very hard mineral, and the other a brilliant black stone (magnetic pyrites) looking much like a mass of loosely formed crystals. Garnets are also formed in several kinds of rock, but are chiefly to be found in the schist. As a rule, these little gems are far too much broken and split by the

intense frost to be worth collecting. In the winter, the hardest rock is so split by the cold that every peculiarity of its composition can be clearly seen. The graphite can be chipped out with an axe and utilised very conveniently for writing.

The scenery everywhere is typical of the "Barrens," the "Bad Lands of the North." In winter, a featureless waste of snow, where in that dark season "come those wonderful nights of glittering stars and northern lights playing far and wide upon the icy deserts; or where the moon, here most melancholy, wanders on her silent way through scenes of desolation and death. In these regions the heavens count for more than elsewhere; they give colour and character, while the landscape, simple and unvarying, has no power to draw the eye." (Nansen.) In summer, when the iron grip of ice is relaxed around the frozen coast, snow may disappear from the interminable wastes of rounded granite hills which are a feature of the interior. The effect of this endless succession of low bare elevations is one of "appalling desolation." The long, high-pitched howl of the wolf, the ultimate note of the wilderness, falls occasionally upon the ear of the twilight camper. This, and the cry of the loon from the lakes, with the crowing bleat of the ptarmigan in the low scrub, are the chance evening sounds (of spring and summer) in the Barrens.

The country generally is mountainous and of a hilly and barren aspect. In some districts comparatively

level Laurentian areas occur, where immense herds of reindeer roam in the summer. At this season the ranges have a dark or nearly black appearance, owing to the growth of lichens upon them, but this sombre character is often relieved in valleys and on hill-sides by strips and patches of green, due to grasses and sedges in the lower bottoms, and a variety of flowering plants on sheltered slopes exposed to the sun.

The high interior of Baffin Land, lying just north of Cumberland Sound, is apparently all covered with ice, like the interior of Greenland. Around the margins of this ice cap the general elevation above the sea is about 5,000 feet, and it rises to about 8,000 feet in the central parts. Large portions of the northern interior are over 1,000 feet above the sea, so that vast regions of the country may be said to be truly mountainous.

There are no trees or shrubs of any kind in Baffin Land. Of Arctic flowers, a small yellow poppy seems to be the hardiest and most widespread. Even in those parts where desolation seems to reign supreme, this poppy (*Papaver radicatum*), and a tiny purple saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*) can generally be discerned. There are coarse grasses growing in scant patches, and immense tracts of reindeer moss, upon which the cariboo entirely subsist.

Unlike the sterile Antarctic, however, it is well known that the flora of Arctic lands is a feature of such importance that it has been the subject of an immense amount of expert investigation carried out

by very many eminent botanists from every country. Professor Bruce says it is quite impossible to enter into detail regarding arctic botany, largely on account of its sheer profusion. "No matter how far the explorer goes, no matter how desolate a region he visits, he is sure to come across one or more species of flowering plants. . . . Every arctic traveller is thoroughly familiar with scurvy grass, the sulphur coloured buttercup, the little bladder campion, several potentillas, the blaeberry, many saxifrages, the rock rose, the cotton grass and the arctic willow." In Grinnell Land (far north of Baffin Land) the British Arctic Expedition of 1875 met with "luxuriant vegetation." The presence or absence of the Arctic current along the shores of these countries seems to have much to do with the problems of vegetation. Baffin Land, bathed in its icy waters, is far more barren than Greenland, where it does not touch. Possibly Grinnell Land is immune from its influence. It is, nevertheless, quite possible for a dense plant life to flourish—under certain conditions of climate, altitude and situation—deep within the Arctic Circle, where even the tundra, a wilderness of snow in the winter, becomes an impassable fever-haunted, mosquito ridden, torrid, flower decked swamp in the summer.

But there is more than this in the botany of Baffin Land! The natural or geological history of the Arctic regions generally is that of the earth's crust itself, and from this point of view the study of these

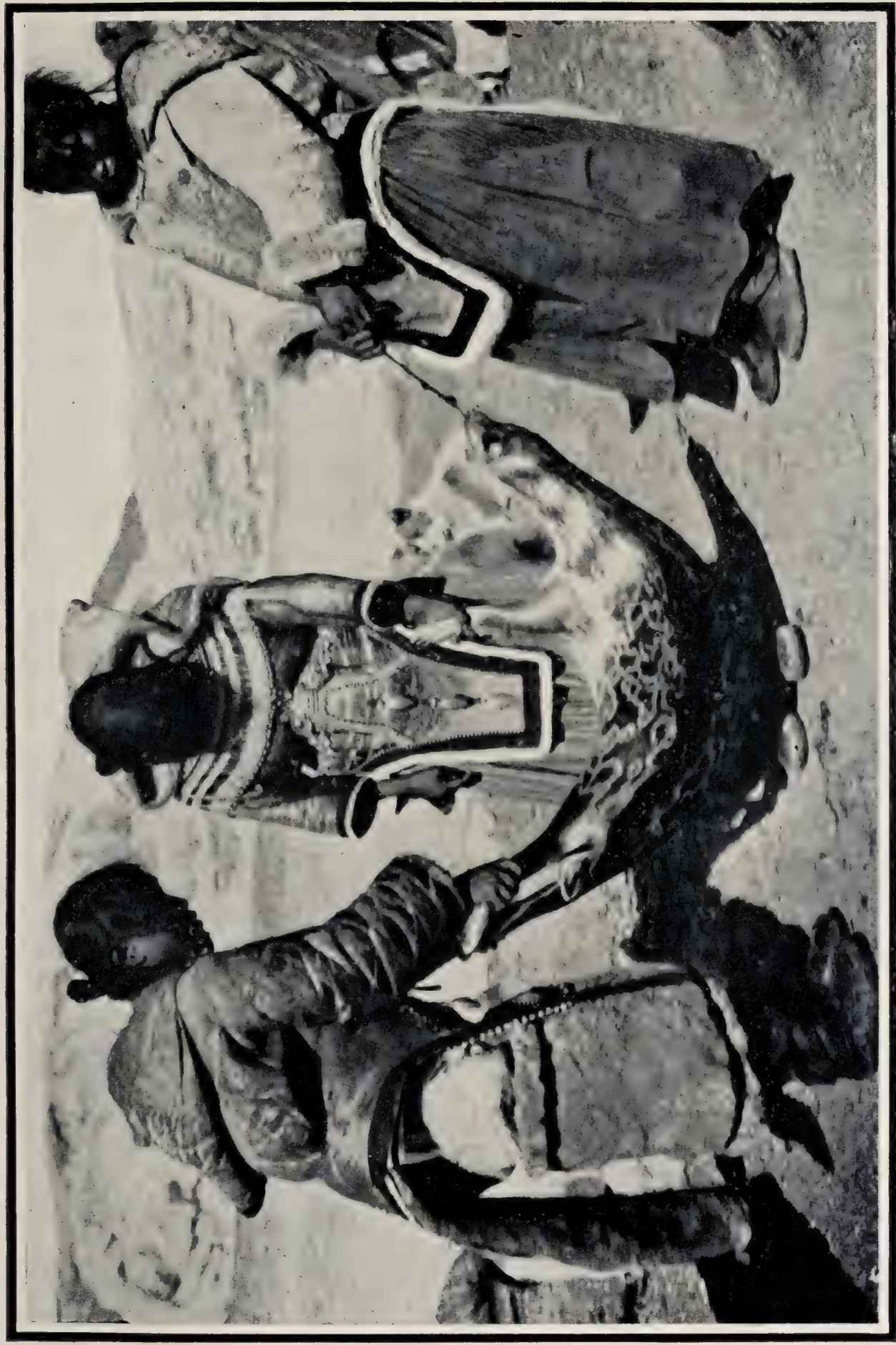
northern blossoms is more wonderful than that of its rocks.

The fossil plants of these ice-bound countries belong to the Miocene period, an epoch warmer than the present, which preceded the glacial age now triumphant there. The latitudes of Baffin Land were once covered by extensive forests representing fifty or sixty different species of arborescent trees, most of them with deciduous leaves, some three or four inches in diameter, the elm, pine, oak, maple, plane, and even some evergreens, showing an entirely different condition of seasons to that which now holds sway in the far, far north. The modern botany of the Arctics, comprising some 300 kinds of flowering plants, besides mosses, algae, lichens, fungi, is characteristic of the Scandinavian peninsula. Now, the Scandinavian flora is one of the oldest on the globe. It represents unique problems in distribution, from which the most tremendous scientific deductions have been drawn, such as those concerning a former disposition of terrestrial continents and oceans, and some concerning changes in the direction of the earth's axis itself! All this is very far beyond the scope of any such account of Baffin Land as the present. Suffice it, nevertheless, to indicate the deep vistas of interest that lie behind the "appalling desolation" of its appearance to-day, and the limitations of its hyperborean native folk.

The reindeer moss is a very important asset of the country. It is a delicate grey-green in colour and

beautiful in form as well. It grows luxuriantly to about the height of six inches. When dry, it is brittle, and may be crumbled to powder in the hands; but when wet it is very much of the consistency of jelly, and very slippery. The reindeer live entirely upon it all the year round. In the winter, when it lies under a deep blanket of snow, to get at it the deer have to scrape their way down with their great splay hoofs. It sometimes happens that a season comes when a thaw may be followed by a sharp frost. In this case the surface of the snow is first melted and then quickly frozen, making a coating of ice over all the surface of the ground. To scrape this would cut the deers' legs, so there is an exodus of the herd to other feeding places, and hunger even to famine and starvation may reign in the district they have deserted. Generally speaking, the herds keep to the high grounds and hills in the winter, because there the moss is more exposed and easier to come at. They move down to the coast at intervals, to lick the salt which comes up through the "*sigjak*," i.e., ground ice, along the shore, when the tides rises and the water leaves pools behind it.

The deer feed in a peculiar manner. Once a pit has been sunk in the snow and the moss at the bottom is browsed down, the creatures do not attempt to enlarge the place, but scramble out again, only to dig a fresh hole and sink shoulder high in it at a little distance, and begin feeding afresh. The herd is always dogged by a pack of watchful wolves, ever on the *qui*



AN ANCIENT ABORIGINAL ENCAMPMENT.

A group of Eskimo on the site of an ancient encampment of the Toonect, or aborigines of that country. Toonect used to build their houses of large stones filled in with moss. They were small but very strong, and are now, as far as can be known, extinct.

vive to attack; but the leaders' vigilance never slackens, and battle breaks out in the wild at the first movement of aggression.

There are one or two particularly interesting facts, astronomical and otherwise, which account for the extraordinary physical phenomena and conditions of life in the polar regions. To begin with the seasons. The "Arctic" properly so called is geographically defined by that circle of latitude where the sun on midwinter day does not rise, and where on midsummer day it does not set. In Arctic countries the sun is never more than $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees above the horizon, and their intense cold is due, in summer, to the sharp obliquity of his rays, and in winter, to his entire absence. In the latitude of Blacklead Island, on December 25th, the whole orb of the sun is not visible, only the upper section shows above the horizon (unless mist or snow overcast the heavens) for a brief ten minutes at midday. On May 18th, conversely, the sun has been noted as shining for eighteen hours, the remaining six out of the twenty-four being a bright twilight, scarcely distinguishable from day.

The whole year round there is little to be seen but rocks and snow. No tilling, sowing, harvesting, mark the progress of the seasons or call man to the pursuits which have brought all civilisation in their train in milder climes. These seasons (which depend, of course, upon the position of the earth in its orbit round the sun, and upon the inclination of the polar

axis to the plane of the ecliptic giving a six month's day and six month's night at the poles), are markedly defined in Baffin Land. But far more distinctly so on shore than at sea, where unbroken ice may reign supreme throughout the greater part of the twelve-month. Winter sets in on the southern coast about the end of September; farther north a week or two earlier. By this date the hills are getting their snow caps, which extend downwards every day, and a thin sheet of ice appears upon the sea at night. A rim of ice along the shore marks the rise and fall of the tide. Frequent snowstorms now set in, and the ice at sea thickens and strengthens, until by November it extends as far as the eye can rove. This ice, however, is not stout or welded enough to bear sleds, except in the fiords and smaller bays, until nearly Christmas time. The sea freezes when the temperature of the air falls to about 15° F., and the whole surface of the water becomes covered with a mass of ice spicules known to polar sailors as Bay Ice, from its forming first in the bays of the coast. Presently this solidifies and thickens, growing ever whiter and more translucent in the process, and is broken, even in calm weather, by the action of gentle swell or the currents beneath into thousands of discs, large and small, like pans of ice. Sea ice is formed at a temperature of 3° F. below the freezing point of fresh water. There are many remarkable and interesting physical distinctions between ice formed on land and ice formed at sea. The latter when melted is quite drinkable,

being not nearly so salt as salt water. The intense cold, though, of drinking water so obtained tends to inflame the mucous membrane of the mouth and throat, and its slight salinity still further augments thirst; so it is never resorted to except of necessity. These pans eventually freeze together into one great solid floor of "pancake ice," and the Eskimo, away hunting in the winter for seal, may camp and live for weeks, miles out from land on the frozen sea.

The days grow ever shorter and shorter until, in midwinter, there may be only a few hours or even minutes of daylight left. The long Arctic night lasts from September to March.

By the end of March, however, the sun is once more high in the heavens; the sudden spring has begun, and the sound is everywhere heard of water trickling under the snow. Readers of Alaskan romance will recall many a fine passage about the ice "going out" on the Yukon, and realise the terrific transformation undergone by the whole still, silent, rigid, frozen landscape when the iron bonds of winter at length give way. Springtime in the Arctics is a wonderful time. The thaw comes from below. The rocks take the heat, and the snow sinks down, baring more and more of them every day. It grows quite warm; bird sounds (ptarmigan and snow bunting) enliven all the day; ducks quack at the floe edge. Sunrise beams upon the Arctic hills until they lie smiling in the full beauty of sunshine on their mantles of untrodden snow.

At the end of June, summer is come; the sun is really hot, and the long-covered earth, bared at last to its benign influence, puts forth heather and grass and flowers. For six months there is no more night. Its place is taken by the pale light that offers so strange a phenomenon to the dweller from the south. If the sky be unclouded, shadows will be seen pointing to the south. If clouds cover the heavens, the landscape stands out without shadow at all, clear and sharp under this strange illumination. There is no one point from which the light can come; it comes from everywhere. Owing to the length of this Arctic "day," the ground has no time to radiate away the welcome warmth, hence the rapid growth of what vegetation the region may show. Again, as Nansen says so poetically: "In these regions the heavens count for more than elsewhere: they give colour and character . . . to the landscape . . . it is flooded with that melancholy light which soothes the soul so fondly and is so characteristic of the northern night."

The stars are an open book to the Eskimo. They know all the principal groups, and use them for the directing of their journeys. They can make a very creditable chart of the northern heavens. They recognise the Plough, and the Bear (which is indeed called "*Nanook*"—the Bear), and they recognise the constellation of three stars in a straight line and at equal distances from each other, which they call the "Runners," and describe as the spirits of three

brothers in pursuit. The arctic hunters are marvellous students of nature generally. They have the lore of the wild at their finger tips, and all the wisdom of the seasons. It is probable that this primitive people have preserved nearly all the original instincts—as to the presence of danger, right direction, etc., etc.—of *primaeval* man, which are all but extinct in the over-civilisation of the modern European.

In August autumn begins. Last year's ice has been broken up and carried far out to sea. There are frequent showers of rain, and the nights begin again to encroach more and more on the day. It is about this time that the trading ships generally arrive and put in at various points along the coast to do business and refit. They pick up the annual intelligence of the whaling stations, and leave for home as soon as the new ice begins to form.

Then winter comes down upon the land once more. The sky, like velvet, is bespangled with stars of incomparable brilliance, burning like opals. The Northern Lights, like lambent curtains of amazing illumination, swing weirdly through the sky; the blanched hills and the frozen fiords stand out in ghostly black and white under the startling moonlight. There is no sound save the sharp cracking of rock or ice under the strain of the intense frost, the uneasy growl of dogs, the distant howl of a wolf.

Suddenly, however, there may be a chorus of barking in the night, as a strange team of dogs sweeps into view up the fiord, or the harbour, and visitors

descend upon the camp. Except for the noise, one could imagine the newcomers to be the ghosts of ancient hunters haunting their old grounds. But cheery cries, the crack of whips and the howls of the dogs, dispel any such idea as the group comes up. They are stalwart and sturdy individuals enough, clad from head to foot in deerskin, and covered with rime and frost. They are seeking hospitality here, and at once friendly doors are open to them, invitations are readily extended and accepted, and soon everyone of the strangers is comfortably bestowed (after Eskimo notions of comfort) in one or another of the various dwellings, the dogs are unharnessed and fed, and peace resumes her tranquil sway.

The natives thus name the four seasons: *Opingrak*, spring; *Auyak*, summer; *Okeoksak*, autumn (i.e., material for winter), and *Okeok*, winter. The months are named by the sequence of events—the coming of the ducks, the birth' of the reindeer fawns, the coming of the fish (sea trout), etc., as “the duck month,” “the fawn month,” “the fish month,” etc. And the days are distinguished as “*oblo*,” to-day; “*koukpât*,” to-morrow; “*ikpuksâk*,” yesterday; “*ikpuksâne*,” the day before yesterday, and so forth. “*Akkâgo*” means next year, and “*akkâne*” is last year.

CHAPTER III

ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

ANOTHER striking feature of the Arctics is the effect upon the appearance and character of those shores touched by the Gulf Stream, as compared with those where its waters never pass. Thus the coast of Greenland is comparatively luxuriant in vegetation and its seas teem with fish, while Baffin Land, opposite, washed by arctic currents, is desolate and barren, with no fishing off its shores. The same contrast holds good with respect to the north and south coasts of Hudson Strait. There are no cod off Baffin Land, but the Labrador fishermen ply their trade right into Hudson Bay.

Baffin "Island" is a trackless, mysterious continent where, high up on the summits of some of the mountains, there are vast lakes fed from hidden springs—or from streams from still higher ranges—wherein salmon trout abound! At least, these fish are exactly like the sea trout which come up the rivers every year to spawn, save that the hue of the belly is bright red. The Eskimo point to this as proof that they never go down to the sea, and call them the "dirty fish," since they never quit the lakes. How they ever

got into them is a mystery the arctic zoölogist must be left to solve, since neither hunter nor fisherman can offer a suggestion. The trout could not have attained any such level upstream. It would almost appear—if one might hazard a guess—that at some remote geologic epoch this part of the N. American continent was submerged, for the Eskimo of Baffin Land speak of an inland sea, now dry, where fossil remains are to be found of large creatures such as the whale and walrus. They come across fossil fish, indeed, in their more extended wanderings, also shells, and bring them back to camp as curiosities.

The Eskimo are properly a seaboard people and seldom penetrate farther inland than thirty miles from the coast, unless during the annual deer hunt, when they may be away for a couple of months, according to the distance the quest may take them.

Possibly these unaccountable trout are the descendants of fish cut off from access to the sea, when the gradual rise of the continental level left lakes of originally salt water among the ranges. Where they are not without marine life (excepting those wonderful seaweeds which are found at the tropics as well as in the arctic), the waters round these shores contain many species of fish commonly known elsewhere, only in a much less developed state. Such creatures as sea anemones, shrimps, sea snails, small squid, and salt water centipedes, are to be found on the arctic beach. Naturalists enumerate a formidable list of the sort, bristling with scientific nomenclature. Then

there are the mosquitoes, of which more anon, and small yellow, white and brown butterflies. It is indeed due to the comparatively rich fauna and flora of the arctic regions, both east and west, that arctic exploration has been carried out so frequently. The utter absence of plant or animal or human life in the dead antarctic has greatly militated against the success of southbound expeditions.

To deal with the mosquitoes ! These insects abound in the summer-time, and are a terrible pest. It is a puzzle how they survive the winter, when everything is frozen solid, and the very spots which thaw under the sudden warmth of an arctic spring and allow them to swarm out in their malignant millions are iron-bound as the rocks themselves for the greater part of the year. So formidable are these insects that man himself has sometimes fallen a victim to their onslaught. On one occasion, a polar bear was crossing a swamp on the prowl, when he was attacked by mosquitoes. They stung his eyes, the inside of his ears, penetrated his nostrils and stung them. As the nasal passages became inflamed and swollen, the bear was forced to open his mouth to breathe, when his enemies swarmed in, fastened on to tongue, palate and throat, causing them also to swell, until the tormented brute succumbed to suffocation. His howls attracted the attention of some Eskimo hunters, who afterwards told the tale.

Another time, some women in a summer camp noticed a kyak (skin canoe) drifting about at sea in

a curious way, and a man went off to investigate. On arriving within hail he found a body in the canoe, leaning back stone dead; done to death in precisely the same way by mosquitoes.

Arctic birds are numerous. Most of them are migratory, but an eagle, a hawk, some owls and a raven, remain the year round. The most typical of all Arctic birds, the Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*), is the first to arrive and bring news of the spring. He comes about the same time as the Ptarmigan. Lastly comes the bird that always seems to greet the explorer on landing, the Purple Sandpiper (*Tringa striata*). He comes soon after the ducks—the Eider, the King Eider, the Pintail and the Harlequin. Between the two, there is a rapid vernal succession of birds, including sea pigeons and geese.

Eskimo hunters speak of the wild swan, on the south coast and in the vicinity of Frobisher Bay. The raven is the only arctic bird which does not change its plumage to match the surroundings. He is always aggressively, blatantly black. Possibly, being so able a match for any ordinary foe, this bird has no need to adopt the “protective resemblance” of white. The writer has watched a raven alight to secure some tit-bit of offal, and keep even the wolfish Eskimo dog at a respectful distance, with its huge beak. The bird is cunning to a degree. It will follow a trapper, note the position of his traps, and return to visit and despoil them of their bait as soon as the coast is clear. Then it takes up its stand on some convenient rock

just out of gunshot range, and watches the trapper on his return, just for all the world as if it relished his comments!

So much for the land birds. At sea there are petrels, gulls, and skuas. The natives do not recognise pictures of puffins or penguins, as these birds are not known on their coasts.

Again, the animals of the frozen north form quite a formidable list. There are three large lakes in Baffin Land (shown on the map at the end), linked together by rivers and making connection with the sea by river.

The southern lake is called "*Angmakjuak*" ("the great one"). The length of this sea may indeed exceed 120 miles by 40 in breadth in its central part. The central lake, "*Tesseyuakjuak*," is possibly 140 miles long by 60 broad, and the northern lake "*Netselik*" (the place of seals) is at least 15 miles across. The difference in level between these great sheets of water is so inconsiderable that the natives can paddle with ease either up or down the waterways connecting them; perhaps none of them lie much higher than 300 feet above the sea. They teem with seal coming up from the coasts, and on the shores of *Netselik* old hunters will tell you they have seen the Red Fox, as well as white and smoky. This may well be so, as the fox is a denizen of Labrador, and might easily cross Hudson Strait on the ice during a hard winter. The seal of these lakes and of the coast (much hunted for food and for their skins by the

natives), are the grey haired seals of wide-spread commerce, but not the fine, fur-bearing animals whose pelts are of the first beauty and value. This latter is a different species and is protected by Government, only a certain number being allowed to be killed each year.

Bears, of course, abound. The female is the only arctic land creatures which hybernates. Then there is the wolf, the white and blue fox,* the ermine, the arctic hare, a tailless snow mouse, or lemming, the musk ox, and—the most widely distributed of all—the cariboo or reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*). It would be impossible to over-estimate the value of the last named beautiful creature, alive or dead, to all the peoples of the arctic countries, east or west. It would be superfluous here to remark much about it, except to note one interesting peculiarity. The reindeer differs from all other deer in that both sexes bear antlers.

The wolves, of course, are the inveterate enemies of the deer. In the winter, when the latter herds leave the lowlands and go up to pasture among the hills, where the snow lies less deep and can be more easily scratched away, they are dogged by the wolves. These hungry and voracious creatures know well enough that the deer are sentinelled while feeding by their fighting males, and make no movement of aggression until one of them chances to stray from

* Occasionally the black fox is taken, and the fortunate hunter may receive as much as the equivalent of \$100 to \$500 for a pair of fine skins, from the Agent.

the herd. When this happens, the luckless animal is immediately headed off towards the shore and hunted down. The wolfish pack concentrates behind it and draws in on either side, so as to leave but one avenue of apparent escape. The quarry dashes down and away, out on towards the ice; but its weight is so great and its hoofs so sharp that the frozen crust of snow gives way beneath it and sorely cuts it about the legs. The deer loses blood and slackens in speed, so that the wolves, skimming easily over the treacherous surface, close in and soon drag it down.

It is a fact well known to the Eskimo hunter that the actual chase is put up by the female wolf, the male only coming in at the last, for the kill. The former do the hustling and placing of the victim, as it were, and the latter do the fighting and killing at the end.

The Lemming (*Cuniculus torquatus*) is a queer typical little arctic animal. It has a chubby build, a rudimentary tail, and no external ears. The first toe of the forepaw is almost nil, but the third and fourth have very strong claws, which grow longer and still more powerful in winter. It is grey in summer and white for the rest of the year. It lives upon the grubs to be found amid the moss under the snow, and burrows its way along as it searches for food. It is quite a familiar sound to hear the scratch, scratch, scratch of a lemming's claws beneath, as one lies on the snow sleeping bench of an Eskimo's *igloo*. The creature's skin when dried is used by the natives for sticking over cuts or boils. It is hunted in the spring by the

women and children, who are guided by the sound of its burrowings. They arm themselves with a stick having a long barbed wire attached, and spear the animal with this through the snow.

Around the coasts there are various species of whales. The Grampus (*Orca gladiator*) or killer, as it is called by the whalers, is a fierce member of the dolphin group, sometimes attaining a length of thirty feet, with large powerful teeth, from ten to thirteen in number, on each side of the jaw. It has a high, upstanding fin on the back, like a shark. It is very swift in the water and can easily overtake and kill one of these latter creature. It is shunned and feared by all the denizens of the arctic seas except the Walrus and the great Sperm Whale. The Grampus is incredibly voracious, and has been known to devour thirteen porpoises and fourteen seals at one meal.

All the smaller animals take refuge in shallow water inshore at the approach of a Killer, only to fall a prey there to the native. The Killers hunt the whale-bone whale, which, fast though it is, cannot make good its escape. The pursuers will leap right out of the water and crash down upon the head of their victim; or rush upon it and ram it, until terrified, stunned and exhausted, the whale drops its jaw, when the Killers tear out huge pieces of the tongue. (The tongue of a whale is a vast mass of fat, weighing in a full sized animal as much as a ton.) Finally, the unwieldly carcase is also despatched, and the Grampuses take themselves off, replete. The male Walrus

is too active and fierce to be beset in this manner, but a female encumbered with a calf will often be pursued by the Killer. She takes the young one under her flipper and tries to escape; but the aggressor rushes in and butts at her. Sometimes he succeeds in claiming this tender mouthful; sometimes he is killed by the infuriated mother.

The Sea Unicorn or Narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*), is a purely arctic animal. The curious "horn" is really the left tooth grown to the length of six or seven feet. It is only hollow for a certain distance. Exteriorly this horn is spirally grooved, to allow presumably for quick thrust and withdrawal. The Narwhal often engage in a mock combat among themselves with these horns, but use them with fierce and deadly precision when engaged in actual warfare.

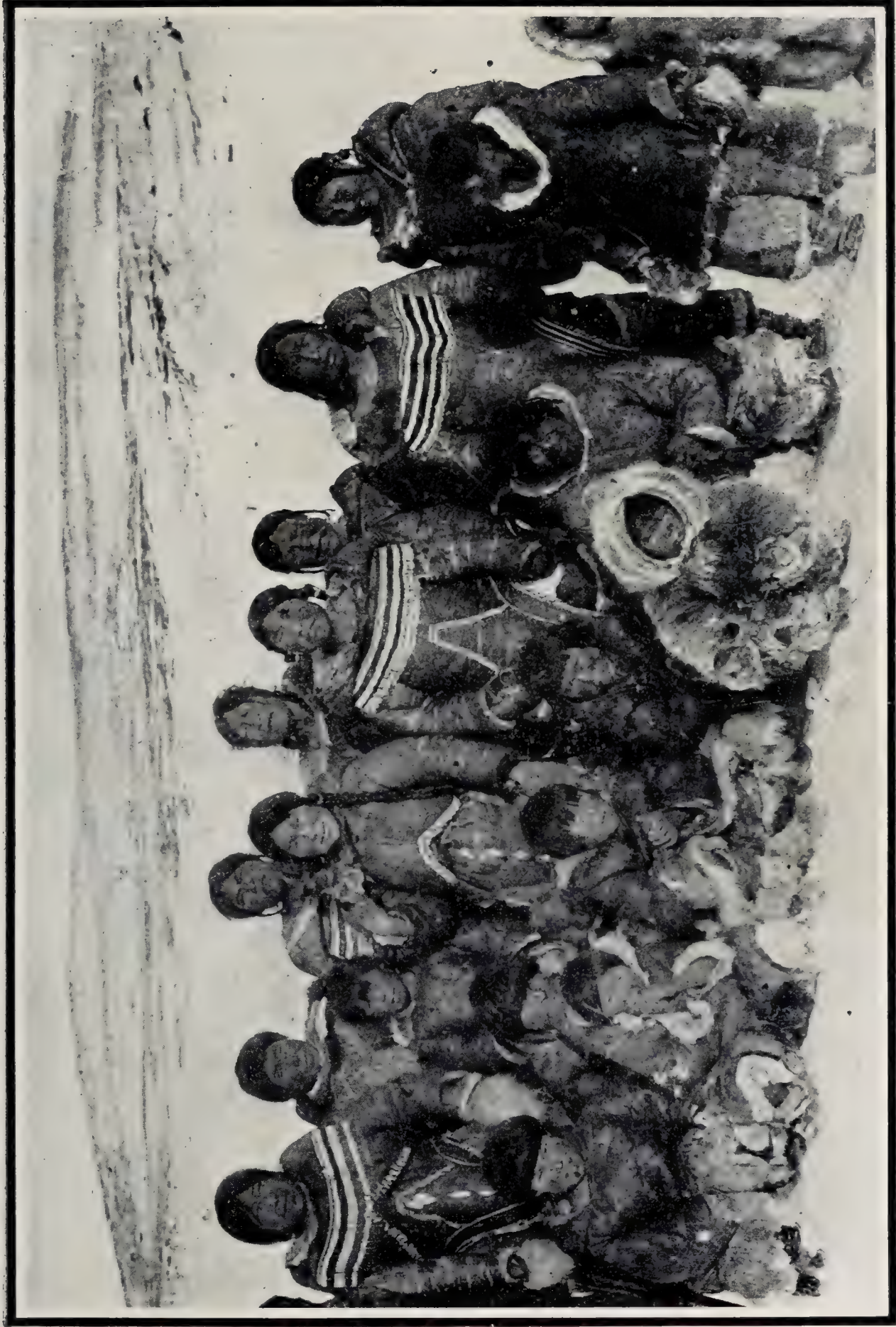
It were too long to linger here with the creatures of the North, since we shall meet them all, and many more, in dealing with the human inhabitants of the country. Arctic animals have a fascination all their own, and of late years a wonderfully sympathetic and intuitive literature has grown up having them almost exclusively for its protagonists. Jack London has endeared the powerful, savage, husky dog to us for all time, in his "White Fang."

CHAPTER IV

THE ESKIMO

THE inhabitants of the Arctic are the Eskimo, also written Esquimaux, Usquemows, called by themselves Innuit (Innuks s. Innooeet p.) or the "people." The word Usquemow is Indian, meaning raw flesh eaters. The English and Scotch anglicised it to Eskimo. The name "Husky" as applied to the native is merely slang, a corruption of Eskimo perpetrated by men whose ears and tongues were untrained to the language—whalers who sometimes employed the tribesmen in their hunting, and dubbed them with the first jargon name that came handy. It is still used in this sense in localities where Europeans are numerous, such as Alaska, and Hudson Bay.

Fure blood Indians do not penetrate so far north as the Eskimo territories, being denizens of the forest but not of the barrens. The Eskimo are a kindly, intelligent people, hardy to a degree. They follow the manner of life and the pursuits of primitive man; but when brought into contact with the whites and with civilisation, show themselves by no means incapable of assimilating a good deal of instruction. They have qualities of amiability, hospitality, ingenuity and



PART OF AN ESKIMO TRIBE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.
With their outside jackets off, the inner jackets showing the ornamentations of beadwork.

endurance, which all travellers have agreed in extolling; although here and there in the records of the voyages of exploration in the nineteenth century we also find unfavourable comments passed upon them. They exist in small, scattered tribes along the sea coasts, whence they derive the bulk of their subsistence. Owing to the establishment of whaling and other stations, the geographical areas of the tribes are now more circumscribed and confined than they used to be, as each station is a centre of trade where most of the necessities of life can be obtained.

The origin of the Eskimo is a matter of ethnographical conjecture. They themselves had no written language until comparatively few years ago, and depended upon oral tradition for their history. And even to-day it is only the few who have been taught to read and write, so that legend still holds sway throughout the greater part of Baffin Land, Cockburn Land, and the rest. Their past is lost in obscurity. In the obscurity perhaps of that neolithic or "reindeer age" of which their life, even now, has so often been cited as a close replica.

That immense span of time in the history of the human race known as the Stone Age, falls into five divisions. There is the Palaeolithic period (Early, Middle and Late), and the Neolithic period (Transitional and Typical). During the last throes of the glacial epoch in Europe, the type of human being was that represented by the relic which has come down to us known as the Neanderthal skull. But the later

Pleistocene period saw a greater diversity in the matter of types, and one race in particular is represented by a fair number of specimens. They denote a good-looking, purely human being. Another race of the same period is represented by a single specimen only. It is known as the Chancelade Race, and "the skeleton, of comparatively low stature, is deemed to show close affinities to the type of the modern Eskimo." (Dr. Marett.) This is exceedingly interesting as giving us some idea of the antiquity of the stock, and as showing how glacial conditions in prehistoric times in Europe produced a type which lingers on amid the races of the modern world in the still existing glacial epoch of the Arctic.

The "Reindeer men" of prehistoric times lived lives no harder in the bleak climate and unprogressive conditions of glaciated Europe than those of the Eskimo in glaciated America to-day. "The races of Reindeer men were in undisturbed possession of western Europe for a period of at least ten times as long as the interval between ourselves and the beginning of the Christian era." (H. G. Wells.) If we add these periods of time together we may form some estimate of the age of a civilisation such as the climatic conditions have produced and proscribed in the modern Arctics.

Perhaps it may be said that in one sense the Eskimo have no history. They are living the same life, under the same rigorous conditions, in the same way now, as their forefathers lived it before them,

and as far back as human life could be traced in the Arctic earth. It is wonderful how faithfully this oral tradition of theirs has been handed down through the generations, for the same adventures and incidents and stories will be told with little or no alteration by various people of widely different tribes, and events that took place centuries ago will still be invariably related with circumstantial precision.

The writer well remembers an account given to him one winter's night by an aged hunter, of some stores left by a party of the early explorers. It was during a journey along the south coast of Baffin Land, and shelter had been sought in the snow house of an ancient Eskimo couple. The old man was grandfather of the tribe, and had been a noted hunter in his day, and had fought many a battle with the savage elements and more savage beasts of the wild. It was after the evening meal. The old fellow and his equally old wife had been warmed with some steaming coffee liberally sweetened with molasses, and regaled with ship's biscuit. The pipes of both had been filled, and were drawing well. Their bronzed, lined faces, lined like the shell of a walnut, shone with contentment, they huddled on their sleeping bench and smoked and dreamed of the strenuous past. A question or two soon elicited a flood of guttural reminiscences. The old hunter pictured himself as a youth again, and went over the exploits of his prime, prompted now and again by the crone at his side, in a shrewd expectation of further acceptable items. Among other

things, he told of the various "dumps" or "caches" of stores made by the white men who came long ago, remembering exactly the localities and the contents of every one. Some had been broken into long since by wandering Eskimo; some had been destroyed by bears; some remained intact. His memory was as exact and reliable as if he had seen the things but a week—instead of a lifetime—before. Perhaps it was an echo, all that time afterwards, of the Franklin tragedy.

These primitive Eskimo inhabit the great archipelago which stretches polewards from the northern shores of the Canadian continent, from Greenland on the east to Alaska and the Aleutian islands on the extreme west. There is, too, a settlement of Eskimo beyond Behring Strait. Some ethnographers hold them to be of purely American origin with no affinities in Asia, however Mongolian they may be in appearance. Dr. Rink believes in an Alaskan origin for the Eskimo, as opposed to an Asian, but another authority, Dr. Boas, thinks the solution of this racial problem might be obtained by means of an archaeological research on the coast of the Behring Sea.

The original Eskimo stock is now probably extinct. In language and physique, many of the present day tribes exhibit traits of racial admixture with the Red Indians. This has occurred in such junction areas as Labrador and Alaska, and has given rise to the probably quite fallacious idea of an Indian origin for the Arctic race. This error could not be made in

Eskimo lands proper. Those who have lived for long years with both Indian and Eskimo, and are intimately acquainted with the language, legends, and characteristics of both peoples, hold strongly to the opinion that they are entirely distinct. Personally, the writer would incline to the belief that the Innooet are of Mongolian stock. He has heard on good authority of a pure Eskimo sailor being addressed by a Chinaman in Chinese, under the impression that he was speaking to a fellow-countryman. It is conjectured that in the remote past some Mongols may have reached the sea coast in the extreme east, and have crossed by boat from island to island, and so to the Arctics of North America. Increasing there in numbers, they presently dispossessed the aboriginals—the “Tooneet”—and drove them to the “back of the Arctic beyond.” But of this more when we come to Eskimo legends.

Undoubtedly the Eskimo are linked, if not by blood certainly *by custom*, to the Arctic peoples of Siberia, to the Lapps and Finns of northern Europe. In historic times they mixed with the Danes and Norsemen. They are not numerically very strong. Forty thousand may possibly total the nation, and of those 12,000 are in Greenland, and rather more in Alaska, leaving some 13,000 souls scattered along the shores of Baffin Land, Melville Peninsula, Boothia, Victoria Island, Banks Island and the rest of the bleak, fragmented continent. It is in Baffin Land, in Boothia, and Victoria that the pure Eskimo race is found.

Elsewhere the type is extremely mixed. It is to be deplored, too, that where the people have been in contact with vicious and unscrupulous whites, traders, sailors, and the rest, the introduction not only of alien blood but of the diseases of "civilisation" have here and there threatened extinction to whole tribes.

The "Central" tribes of Eskimo (i.e., those tribes exclusive of the Greenlanders, the Alaskans, and all the Labradorians save those on the northern shore of Hudson's Strait) number about thirty-two. They have been carefully classified, enumerated, and geographically located, by the ethnologist, Dr. Boas. Three communities are found along the northern shore of Hudson's Strait (the southern shore of Baffin Land), the *Sikkoswelangmeoot* at King Cape, the *Akuliangmeoot* at North Bluff, and the *Quamanangmeoot* in the Middle Savage Islands. All along the coast of Davis' Strait are scattered another nine tribes, the chief of which are the *Nuvungmeoot*, in the neighbourhood of Frobisher Bay, and the *Oqomiut* (divided into four territorial groups) all about Cumberland Sound. The Lake Netselings Eskimo are a branch of these, called the *Talikpingmeoot*. In the extreme north of Baffin Land the *Tunungmeoot* are found at Eclipse Sound, and the *Tununirusirmeoot* about Admiralty Inlet.

There is constant intercourse and intermarriage among these scattered groups (none of which is numerically large), wherever the tracts of land in between them are not wholly impassable. Other groups

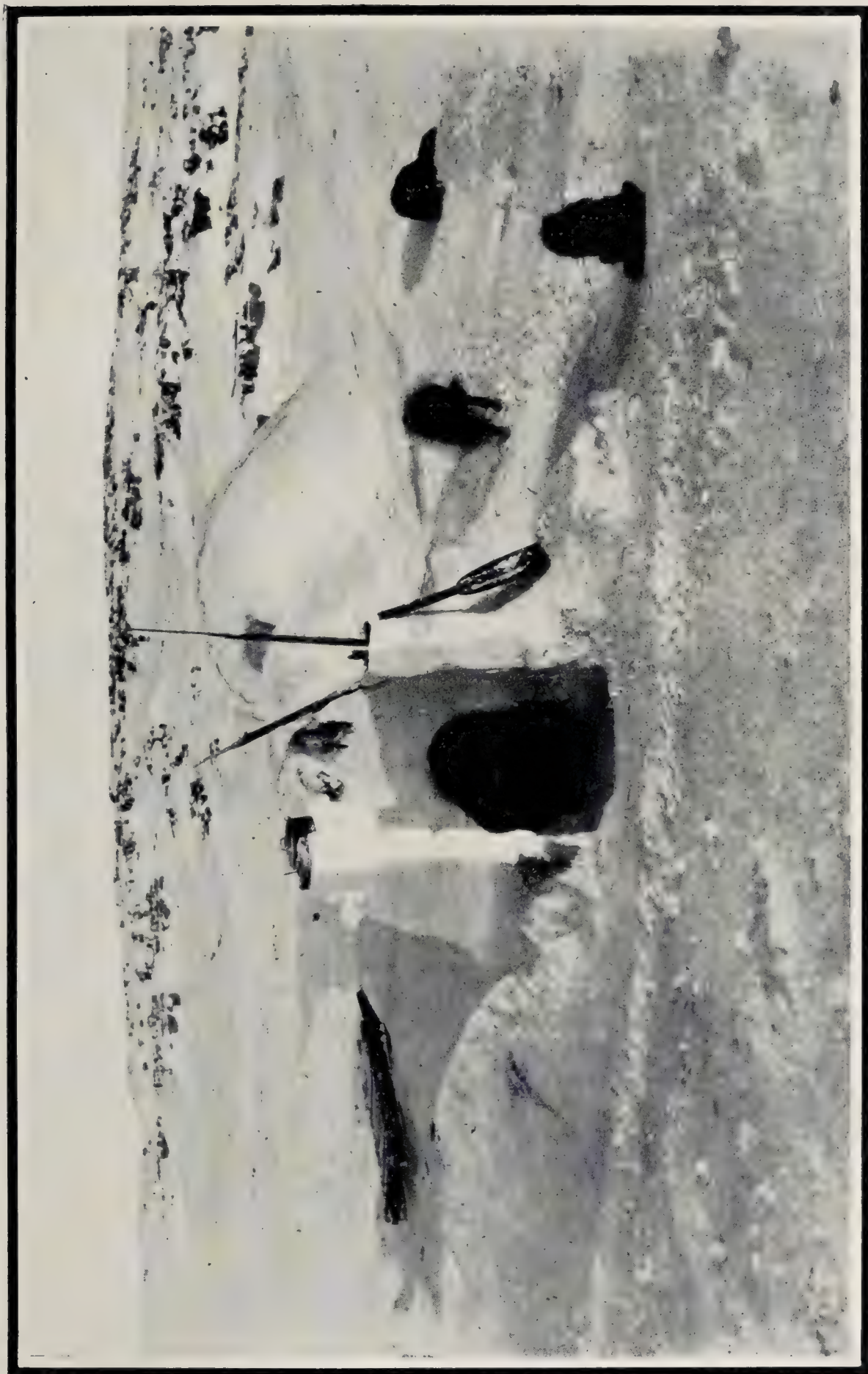
are more or less isolated by long stretches of territory, unnegotiable by any means of Eskimo travel. These folk are not only migratory in their habits, but great travellers for the sake of travelling, as well. They often engage on journeys which occupy months or even years, although there is a strong tendency among the old people to return to their native spot before the end, and so territorial distinctions are maintained.

Even before the advent of Europeans and the trade they brought with them, there was a certain amount of barter going on among the Arctic folk themselves, occasioning not a little movement. More driftwood being found in some localities than in others (chiefly at a place called *Tudjadjuak*), the tribes came from everywhere to barter for it with those on the spot. Again, the soapstone or "potstone," of which their lamps and cooking utensils were made, is found in a few places only, such as at *Kautag*, *Kikkerton* and *Quarmaqdjuin*; so that the natives came long distances to dig or trade for that, too. Pyrites for striking fire was also a valuable if local production, and flint for arrow head making. On the whole the relationships of the various tribes were very friendly, and open hospitality was everywhere observed throughout all the regions where communication was fairly open and established. Some feuds or tribal reserves obtained where the peoples were strange to each other, and hence arose some extraordinary customs as to greetings, which looked very much like

challenges to single combat by the chosen representatives of either group.

There seems to be some evidence that the present day Eskimo were not the original inhabitants of these regions at all. There are definite traces still remaining of an earlier folk called the *Tooneet*. Eskimo tradition speaks repeatedly of these *Tooneet* as having been conquered by the ancestors of the present race and pushed farther and farther north, until they were lost sight of altogether. Some of their words have been preserved by the Medicine Men (*Anga koeet*, the conjurors), and the remains of their dwellings and graves were to be seen up to a few years ago, the latter still containing skeletons and weapons.

The *Tooneet* were short, between four and five feet in stature, and very broadly built. (On this subject the reader should consult Dr. Rink, "Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo.") The skull was oval, unlike the present race, who are round-headed. Their weapons were fashioned of stone, but of a different shape to those of to-day. Their skin canoes were short and broad instead of the long, narrow *kyak* in use now. Of these aboriginals little further trace or memory remains. The writer met a very ancient Eskimo on the south coast of Baffin Land, who related that his grandfather had seen two *Tooneet* on the shores of an inland lake. They were getting into their canoes, and would not allow the other to come near. They appeared to understand nothing of the shouted greeting, but hastily paddled off. The Too-



AN IGLOVEGAK OR ESKIMO DWELLING.

The house is built entirely of snow and takes about a day to build and finish, the window seen in front is a slab of fresh water ice.

neets were also found on the coast of Labrador. The present tribes of the region were originally enslaved to them. At *Nakrak*, their remains are to be seen.

The unmixed Eskimo type of to-day closely resembles the Chinese, with an average stature of five feet, lank black hair and small peaked eyes. Nansen gives us a very life-like picture of them: "Their faces are as a rule round, with broad, outstanding jaws, and are, in the case of the women particularly, very fat, the cheeks being especially full. The eyes are dark and often set a little obliquely, while the nose is flat, narrow above and broad below. The whole face often looks as if it had been compressed from the front and forced to make its growth from the sides. Among the women, and more especially the children, the face is so flat that one could almost lay a ruler across from cheek to cheek without touching the nose; indeed, now and again one will see a child whose nose really forms a depression in the face rather than the reverse. It will be understood from this that many of the people show no signs of approaching the European standard of good looks, but it is not exactly in this direction that the Eskimo attractions usually lie. At the same time there is something kindly, genial and complacent in his stubby, dumpy . . . features which is quite irresistible. Their hands and feet alike are generally small and well shaped." Elsewhere he adds: "One cannot help being comfortable in these people's society. Their innocent, careless ways, their humble contentment

with life as it is, and their kindness, are very catching, and must clear one's mind of all dissatisfaction and restlessness." The length of the excerpt will be forgiven, since it gives more than a delightful pen picture—an inimitable bit of human psychology, that touch of insight which makes the whole world kin.

The Eskimo on the southern coasts of Baffin Land are taller than their fellows, sometimes attaining a stature of six feet and breadth in proportion. The majority of the men are beardless. Their hair, black and coarse, is worn either long or short, but is cut square across the forehead. It covers the ears, to prevent frostbite, and a band is tied round the head to prevent it blowing about too freely in the wind. We shall deal with the ladies' coiffure at greater length in another connection.

Each band of Eskimo inhabits some particular spot or tract of the coast, and takes its name after the country, or some peculiarity it exhibits. For instance, the land at the point of Fox Channel and Hudson Strait is called *Sikkoswelak*, a term which describes the fact that the ice just there is seldom stable, owing to the swift local tides. Thus the tribe is known to the rest as the *Sikkoswelangmeoot* or "The-People-of-the-Place-which-never-Freezes." Again, there are the *Puisortak* or the "People-who-live-where-Something-Shoots-up" (a blow-hole in a glacier). The tribe is not a very big unit. It consists of about ten to twenty families (generally less, and, be it noted, the people are polygamists), but the birth-rate is a low

one. The deaths fairly balance the births, so that their numbers remain more or less stable. Were not this the case, the regions they inhabit could never support them, for the Eskimo are voracious eaters (naturally, considering the climate!) and so far as land animals are concerned, the hunting is very scanty for many months of the year.

Apropos of this peace-loving, non-belligerent quality in the Eskimo character, some word should be offered in explanation of the fact that these people have occasionally shown themselves dangerous to the white men, and have murdered a few whalers and traders.

As far as any historical records of them exist at all, it would seem that on one occasion only did the Eskimo ever go to war, or make an active and successful stand against their enemies. This was many centuries ago. The handful of Norsemen from Iceland who originally colonised some spots along the coast of southern Greenland, lived peaceably enough with the natives they discovered there. At last, however, a quarrel broke out, blood was spilt, and the Eskimo, plucking up a courage and spirit never since repeated, fought and killed off the foreigners. But in America, whenever the Innuits came into contact with the Red Indians they simply fled before them ever farther and farther into the icy fastnesses of the north. The red men seem to have been always particularly savage and inimical to the others. And when in the course of time they became possessed of firearms, they

pressed this overwhelming advantage against the spear and bow-and-arrow people more ruthlessly than ever.

The Eskimo believed that it was the white fur trader who had armed the *Adlât* with these "fire-tubes" against him, hence the original hostility of these people towards all other white folk. As a matter of fact, the servants of the Hudson Bay Company did all they could, in those early days, to protect the Eskimo against the Indian, and to bring about an understanding between the native races of the great territory they exploited. It was, however, this original fear and prejudice which must be held accountable for any barbarity white men have met with since at the hands of the Eskimo (unless indeed the instance has been one of recently and immediately provoked reprisals). For the most part, it certainly holds good that the inhabitants of the Arctic north have been the least dangerous "savages" explorers have ever met. There are some conflicting accounts on this subject in the annals of arctic voyagers; but as a very general rule the Eskimo have been found to be a kindly and harmless folk. Seldom as they wage war against others, seldom as they can be provoked or even terrified into self-defence (except by flight), they never fight, in a collective sense, among themselves. This is not due to effeminacy or cowardice, for no one could connect any such suspicion with the hardy intrepid natives of the most pitiless regions of the earth. It is simply that the

Eskimo are not made in the mould too common to all the other races of mankind—they are not fighters. Most people, it has been said, regard war as a reversion to primitive instincts. But some historians hold that war—organised war, as we understand the term to-day—was not *primaeval* in its origin. It was unknown to early man, and it is unknown to early man's last representatives, such as the Black Fellows of Australia and the Eskimo of the Arctics, at the present time. The Eskimo can be doughty enough in single combat when necessity or custom require it of him; but generally speaking he is the most pacific being on earth.

Where these people come within the sphere of practical British influence, they are treated somewhat on the same lines as the North American Indians, but without being gathered into Reservations. There is a Government Agent in charge of the tribe, and its material needs are provided for by the annual supply ship sent along the coast. It is generally the Agent, trading or Departmental, who extends the first hand-clasp of welcome to medical man or evangelist who betakes himself to the peoples of the Arctic.

There have been, however, few travellers in Baffin Land, excepting, of course, the seamen who use its coast. Much of the country is unexplored. Probably the only whites who have penetrated it at all have been missionaries and explorers.

Thus the very modern and limited story of Baffin Land trade, etc., is the only civilised history it has.

As for its native history, we might refer almost without qualification to any archæological account of the fur-clad men of the stone age. The similarity of the Eskimo's implements, their ways of life, their primitive pursuits, their domestic and tribal management, to those of the neolithic age, has often been pointed out. The only other notices of the Baffin Islanders to be found are those which occur in the journals of explorers' voyages, such as Captain Parry's second expedition of 1821, in which we get a lively account of the junketings on the ice between the "savages" and the crews of the "Fury" and the "Hecla."

It was during this voyage that the leader fell in with an Eskimo girl whose name should be rescued from oblivion. Igloolik added to many native graces and accomplishments a bright intelligence and so good an idea of hydrography and of the seacoasts in the neighbourhood of the "Fury's" moorings, that the Captain utilised the charts and drawings she made for him in the further prosecution of his expedition, finding them always reliable and mainly correct. He afterwards called an island by her name.

Ten years later, Captain John Ross received the same sort of assistance during his second Arctic voyage, from another Eskimo woman named Teriksin. She revised and corrected for him the sketches of the surrounding coasts furnished by some of the men of the tribe.

The chart which illustrates Chapter XII is just such another as Igloolik and Teriksin might have drawn.

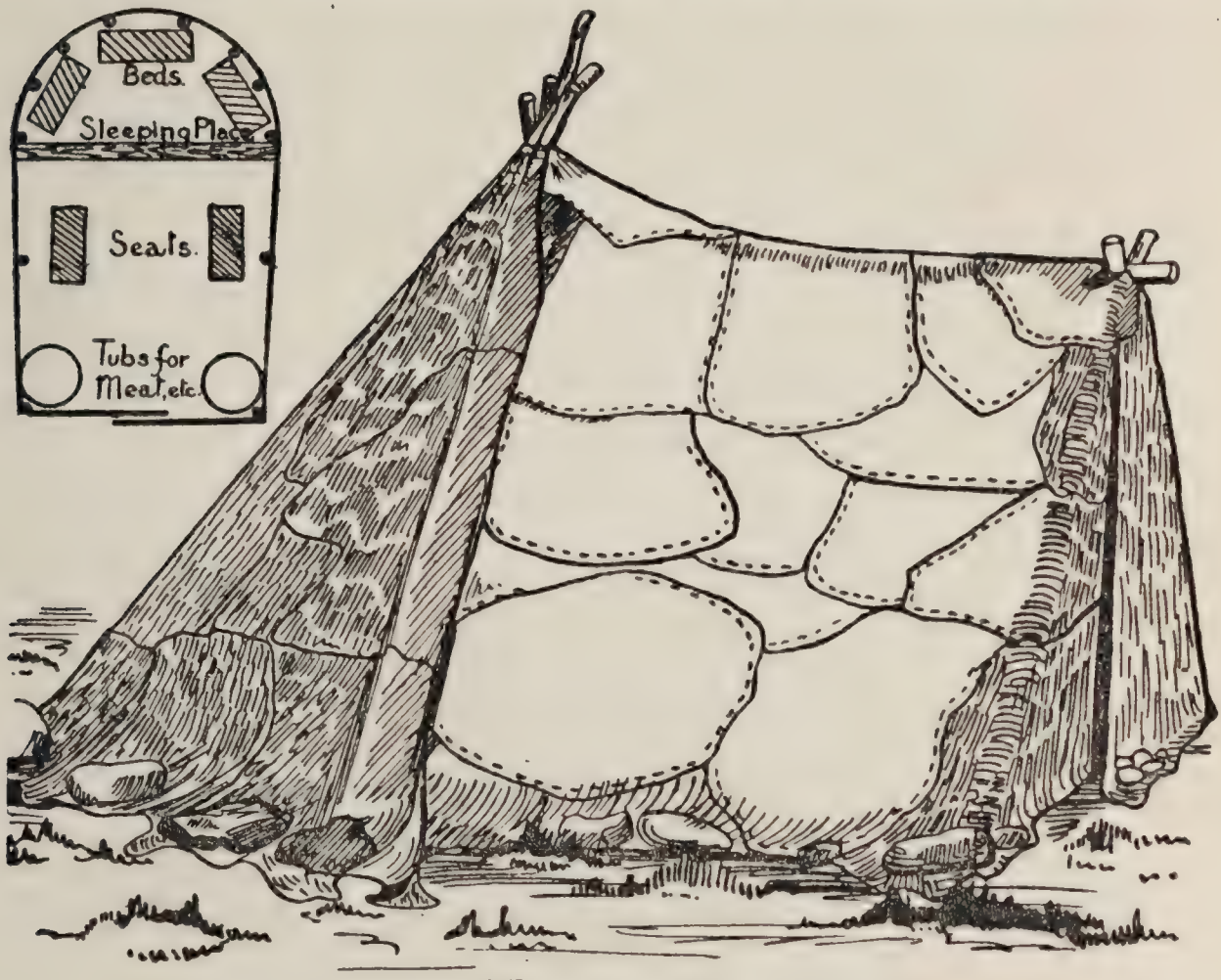
It was furnished from memory by a man called Pitsoolak, and is very fairly correct. The hunters and fishers of the Arctic are taught as children to memorise the contours of the coast, all landmarks, and every "blaze" of any sort a trail might afford. They have no unit of measurement, except the "sleep," i.e., the length of a day's march and its interval of rest.

CHAPTER V

THE BUILDING OF THE VILLAGE

THE Eskimo are a wandering folk, thus their dwellings must of necessity be capable of quick erection, demolition and easy transport. The tribe lives in tents in the summer, moving from one camp to another as the hunters decide; but winter quarters are more permanent, and the snow built house—the *igloo*—takes the place of the sealskin *tupik* on a more lasting foundation. The Eskimo tent is a wholly different affair from the Indian wigwam or lodge. It consists of a penthouse shaped framework of poles, semi-circular at the back, with overlapping strips or curtains of dressed skin for the entrance in front. The whole thing carries a covering of skins, firmly and beautifully stitched together. The back part of the tent, used as the family sleeping place, is covered with skins of the large ground seal—*ogjuk*—or of the ordinary grey seal, with the hair left on in order to ensure some darkness during the long, unbroken day of the arctic summer. The heavy hair also serves to throw off the rain in wet weather. But the front portion of the dwelling has a roofing of the inner membranes of the sealskins, pared from the entire pelt when fresh and

moist. These membranes are first stretched upon frames and dried, prior to being sewn together, when they become almost transparent, so that there is plenty of light in the rest of the tent. They are so beautifully and so neatly stitched as to be practically water-



AN ESKIMO TUPIK.

A summer tent of sealskins stretched over a framework of poles made from driftwood and held down with boulders. The shaded parts show skins with hair for the purpose of excluding light and to throw off rain. The front part is made of membrane to give light. These tents, or tupiks, are used in summer camps, lighter ones being used for travelling.

proof, like the fine fishing jackets made of dried and split seal gut for the kyakers. The finish of Eskimo clothing, fur "blankets," and tent coverings, is always neat and workmanlike and gives no ragged, tattered impression of nomad savagery such as might be derived from some Indian's belongings.

74 The Building of the Village

Towards the back of the tent, inside, a board is fixed from side to side, and the whole space between this and the walls is filled with a deep bed of heather, spread on top with deerskins. This is the sleeping place of the family, in the dark half of the dwelling. Additional deerskins serve as blankets, and lie about the bed, rolled up, during the day. The rest of the furnishing is very simple.

Inside the entrance hang the bags of seal oil used for lighting or cooking purposes. Then there are the cooking pots ("kettles," as they are called), deep, oblong boxes of soapstone without a lid. And the lamps, also of soapstone, and in shape not unlike a crumb tray, with a raised lip and a little shelf at the back for refuse bits of wick. These "lamps" are fed with seal oil. The wick consists of dried moss and gossypium. This is moulded into pellets; a row of wick balls is set on the rim of the lamp and then kneaded down into a line upon it and kept carefully trimmed, so that the edge of flame remains clear and bright. All the cooking is done over a "lamp" of this description, unless over a fire of heather and driftwood out in the open. The Eskimo housewife uses a blubber hammer (a stone, or mallet of ivory tusk set in a wooden handle), to beat down the seal or whale fat into oil for her lamps. Her furs, and her cooking pots, together with her needles, and knives and implements for dressing skins, constitute the Eskimo woman's domestic outfit; a training in the clever use of them is the Eskimo girl's education, and

the dowry of the Eskimo bride. The tent and these impedimenta are portable enough for the wanderings of the arctic summer, and it is remarkable what an amazing host and medley of belongings can be stowed in the family travelling boat, and unloaded from it—a veritable Pandora's box—at the next bit of summer beach.

The winter locale and the winter dwelling is altogether another story. The tribe having chosen the site of a village in some sheltered bay, near a frozen lake or stream (or, at any rate, where ice or water can be obtained), will return to it year after year, and remain there throughout the long dark season, until the time comes round again for the summer-exodus. An occasional excursion is undertaken by both men and women in search of supplies, but the old folk are left on guard.

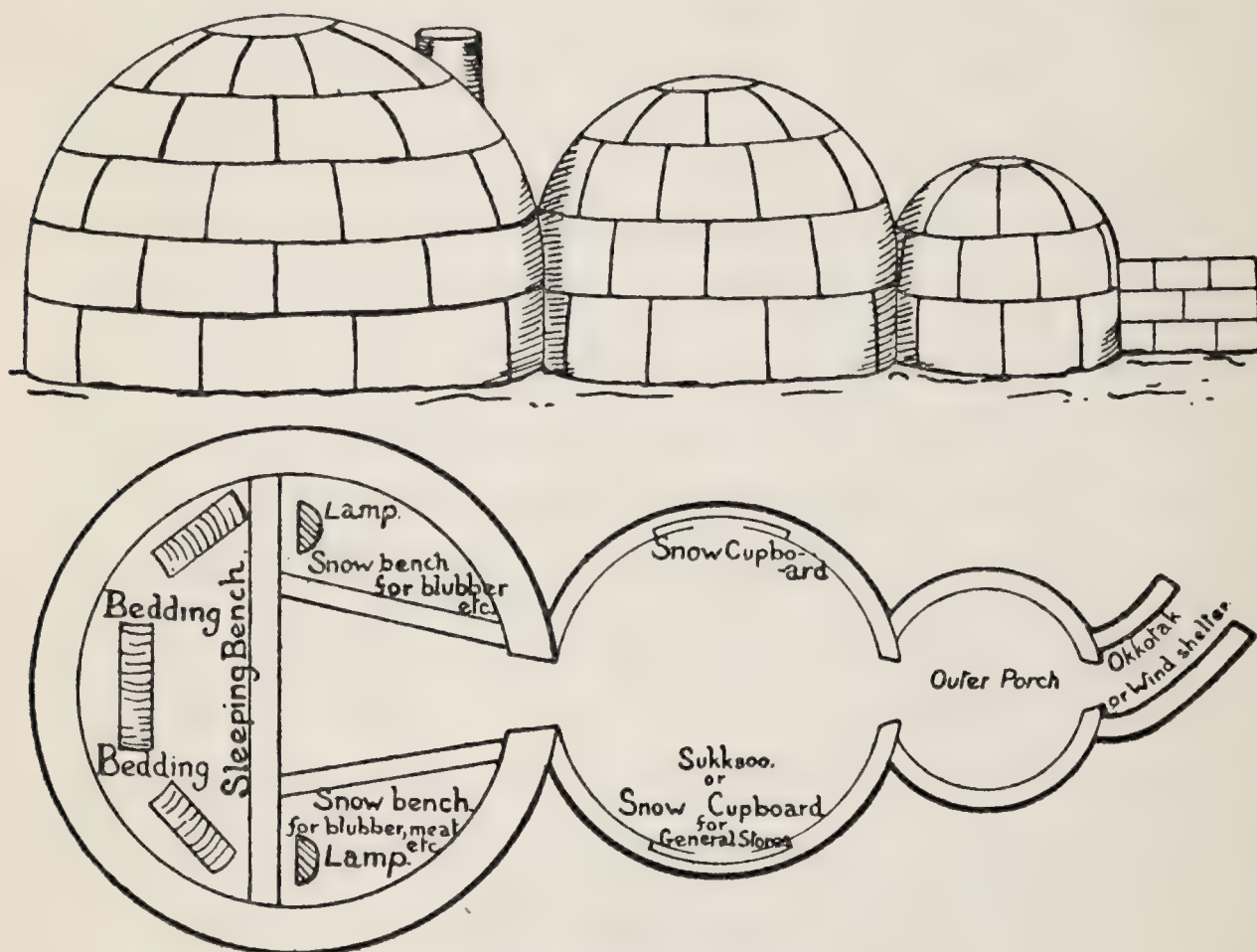
The building of this village is quite a work of art, and is begun as soon as the snow lies deep enough. Before this happens, the tents have been getting very cold to live in, despite the stitching on of several layers of dried heather to break the force of the wind and keep all snug inside. At last a day comes when by common consent the hunters all remain in camp, and join forces with the old men and the boys to build the winter dwellings.

Each man plans and builds his own house according to the size of his family; but only in his turn, and assisted by the rest of the community, to whom he has already given, or is prepared to give, his services.

76 The Building of the Village

The first houses to be erected are those of the *Angakooeet*, the Medicine Men; the chief hunters are the next to be considered, and everyone else comes in the order of his estimation in the tribe.

The main considerations the Eskimo has to bear in mind in building his snow house are that it will have



AN ESKIMO SNOWHOUSE.

Ground plan and elevation of a snowhouse large enough for one family. (Central Eskimos.) These very complete houses are built in the winter encampments and last through the winter, those built in temporary camps are less elaborate. The one shown in the sketch would occupy half to the whole of one day to build.

to be kept in repair, and that it must be adequately lighted and warmed. This means labour and oil, so for his own sake the dwelling is planned on as small a scale as possible. It varies in nothing but in this point of size from all the rest of the village.

The hunter having chosen his site, next takes a

sealing spear, a long twelve-inch knife and a saw, and begins piercing the snow in every direction, his object being to find a spot where it is deep, and so closely packed and hardened by the wind that it can be cut out into great blocks for building. Otherwise his "bricks" would be too brittle or too friable for the purpose. Should no such patch lie near at hand, the builder calls all hands, and together they start trampling and packing down the snow with their feet, while the old men, the women and boys constantly bring up fresh supplies and throw it in to be stamped firm. Having thus prepared what he considers sufficient material for his purpose, the good man commences to saw out huge rectangular blocks of this solidified snow mass, each one of which taxes his utmost strength to lift. He begins his house by building a ring of them, a larger or smaller ring as the case may be, fitted and jointed together with the utmost nicety by means of his knife. A second tier is added to this ring, the builder working from the inside and the blocks being brought up by his assistants. As soon as this is "well and truly laid," he trims the upper surface to a slope, and continues building, but in a spiral now and slightly sloping inwards, until he has reached the top of what has grown to be a dome roof. A key block is deftly fitted in to complete and close it, and the shell of the dwelling is complete.

A semicircular opening in the side is next cut out for the doorway, and then the builder turns his atten-

78 The Building of the Village

tion to the sleeping bench—the principal feature of the Eskimo *igloo*. He builds a line of blocks from side to side, facing the opening, up to the height of a man's legs. The space between this and the walls is filled with broken snow like rubble, which is trampled down until brought to the necessary level, so as to form a solid bench of snow right across the building.

Then side pieces are built out, to form solid shelves for the lamps and family utensils and to serve generally as a larder and storage place for oil and blubber; so that, by the time all is done there is little of the original floor space left.

The next step is the porch or *sukso*, another little domed erection much like the main *igloo*, built in front of the entrance and intended, first to break the force of the wind and to keep the larger place warm, and secondly as a store house for surplus meat and blubber, for the dogs' harness, whips, sealing lines, and anything the latter and the wolves might find eatable. (Eskimo dogs, be it remarked, find nothing uneatable save sticks and stones). As an entrance or exit for the *sukso*, a further passage is built, like a little tunnel; again as protection from the arctic wind.

The finishing touch is the window. Light is a necessity, but the Eskimo is scarcely particular about ventilation. The less he gets of that the more successful his architecture seems to be. A square opening is cut high up in the dome of the *igloo*, facing the

sleeping bench. It is then glazed after the fashion of the Arctics. The builder sets off for the nearest sheet of fresh water ice, and with the butt end of his sealing spear shivers out a good thick pane of it. This he places over the hole in the roof, packing its edges round with half melted snow, and pouring water over the packing. In two minutes, everything is frozen airtight and solid, and a window of flawless ice lets the illumination of the northern night into the pure and icy chamber of the newly made house. Failing a window of ice, one is made of strips of dried seal intestine (a thin, translucent material, not unlike oiled silk), stitched together with fine deer sinew. The seams are parallel, and as neatly executed as if by machine working on the smallest stitch. The fabric is stretched over the opening and pegged down at the corners, and congealed into its place by half melted snow. A small hole is cut in the dome for ventilation, and a snow block provided to stop it up again when necessary.

Finally, the interior has to be glazed. While the householder himself has been busy more or less within the building, on the outside the old men and the children and the women have been set the task of packing every joint and crevice in the snow masonry with loose snow, so as to make it absolutely wind tight. Now comes the moment when the doorways, too, are closed and every entrance blocked. Two lamps, well trimmed and well supplied with oil, have been carefully lit and left burning inside, much as

80 The Building of the Village

we in this country leave a sulphur candle in a room to be fumigated after infectious illness, and seal up the door. As the lamps burn slowly away, the temperature rises and all the surface of the snow is slightly melted. As the lamps die out the temperature falls again, and the surface freezes to glass-like smoothness. Every asperity of the sawn blocks of snow is annealed, and the dwelling is as proof against draught as the inside of a bottle. Water, too, is thrown on the floor, to make it smooth as marble and as durable as cement.

The writer has dwelt thus at length upon the building of the Eskimo's winter quarters, since there is something almost like a fairy tale in this fantastic yet ingenious and practical use of snow and ice. If masters of taste have always insisted upon the principles in architecture that design should be in keeping with site and surroundings, and material should be indigenous to the locality, surely the houses that these hardy children of the frozen North build for themselves are by no means wanting in true artistry.

These snow houses do not take very long to construct. An Eskimo can build an *igloo* large enough to house about six people in a few hours, given some assistance. It would be imagined that no great degree of comfort could be expected within a dwelling where a thaw of the roof and walls begins as soon as the temperature rises above freezing point. But warmth is a matter of degree in the Arctic, and shelter from



AN ESKIMO HOME.

Here is a little collection of igloes joining each other, with one common entrance. It is really a collection of relations living together, each one having their own iglo with doorways opening into the principal families' iglo.

the bitterness of the wind alone is almost warmth. The stillness of the air inside, the greatly lessened intensity of cold, and the local if foul warmth over the lamps and cooking pots, all make for comfort as the native understands it.

In some parts of the country the natives line the dome and walls of their houses with cleverly stretched skins, and between them and the snow walls the intervening space acts as a regulator against the interior warmth, so that excessive thaw is checked, or its effects are prevented from damping the family circle below.

Lest the foregoing account of the white and frozen village should convey too dazzling an idea of such a settlement, it should be remembered that the snow all round and about is trampled up, and incredibly defiled by all the refuse of a community who have no ideas at all about sanitation and seemly surroundings. Hence there is an appearance of dirt and squalor wherever the Eskimo encamp, and these little congeries of human beings contrive quite effectually to blot and mar the pure immensity of the snow-white northern landscape.

The *Igloovegak* once finished, it remains to do the furnishing. This is essentially the women's work. Heather is lavishly spread over the sleeping bench, and covered again with the heavy winter skins of deer. The rolled-up fur rugs (or "blankets") of the family are ranged round the walls. Two of the soapstone lamps are placed on stands at each end of the sleeping

82 The Building of the Village

bench, and a rough framework of wood and deer thongs arranged above them by way of a rack for drying clothes. Stone cooking pots may be suspended over the lamps when required, and a store of blubber and meat is kept handy on the snow benches behind the lamps.

The rest of the family belongings are stowed away in the porch, and the house is ready for occupation.

There is another description of snow dwelling used by the Eskimo called a *Sinniktâkvik*, an acquired sleeping place. This is merely a temporary affair, a hastily built *igloo* sufficient to house a travelling party for the space of a "sleep," having no porch or window, and only intended to be abandoned next day.

It is interesting to note that the remains of the dwellings of the Tooneet can be distinguished by the fact of their circular floors having been laid down with rough stones, unlike the modern *igloo*, which leaves little or nothing to mark its site by the time it has all melted away in summer. The sleeping bench in the Tooneet house was narrower than the present day Eskimo's, showing that the earlier people were of shorter stature.

The family continue to inhabit the winter *igloo* until the spring thaw comes, and the roof falls in. Then, for a week or two, skins are stretched over the hole to keep the storms from beating in; but this is only a temporary measure. By the time the milder weather really sets in, and the trickle of water can be

heard everywhere, and the tunnelling, too, of the lemming under the sleeping bench, the *tupik* has to be in readiness. It has been stored away under a heap of stones during the winter, but with the advent of the ducks it is brought forth and erected once more.

These Eskimo settlements are not built according to plan. Each man chooses a site for his own *igloo*, generally in the shelter of some rock, or where there is a good supply of hard packed snow. The dwellings are not very scattered, however, but grouped fairly closely together, for the double purpose of sociability and common defence against attack by dogs, wolves, or bears. The true Eskimo village boasts of no common room or general meeting house such as may be in use among some of the tribes in Alaska and elsewhere, where few native customs survive unchanged. Nor is the log or sod hut ever seen in the regions where Eskimo life is still lived as it used to be before Europeans set foot in the polar wilds.

It is noteworthy that, when an Eskimo tribe moves to another locality, the old *igloos* are never destroyed. In the barrens, the law of hospitality is universally observed, and such of these buildings as may survive the springtime thaw, might serve for shelter at any time to travellers on journey. Those that are fairly intact when the tribe moves away are merely blocked up; but those which have become unsafe have the roof knocked in. The writer has frequently come across these deserted villages in the course of his journeys,

and had occasion to avail himself of the shelter thus offered. It is a weird and desolate sight—a collection of derelict *igloos*—some gaping open, others closed; but no smoke or steam escaping from their little domes. And, over all, the pall of the frozen silence of the Arctic.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEALING GROUNDS

THE day's work in an Eskimo village (i.e., permanent winter quarters), is full and varied, and quite regular. It is a busy life they lead, both men and women, marked by all sorts of skilled activities; by intervals of neighbourly recreation and gossip; by the excitement and stir of the hunters' return from sealing or bear hunting; and by wonderfully cheery, cosy, hospitable orgies of eating in the evening, when everyone is getting dry and warm and replete for the night.

The hunters start out early in the morning, after a hasty meal of raw flesh and a drink of water, accompanied by their sons and the dogs, four or five in number, harnessed to a light sled loaded with lines and harpoons, or whatever implements may be needed for the proposed chase. The team starts out in a fine tear, urged by shouting and the cracking of whips, and off they all race, men and dogs together, to the sealing grounds out on the frozen sea, or inland for deer. The stars serve as a compass, or in thick weather the wind will be sufficient guide.

No food is borne on the sled, for the hunter de-

pend upon himself for his dinner. The duty of the boys is to watch the sled, to mind the dogs, and see they do not fight or stampede, to study the conditions of the ice, the signs of the weather, the habits of animals, to note their calls and movements and how to imitate them, to take careful notice of the topography of the country and make mental drawings of it to serve as charts and maps, to read the stars, and, generally to endeavour to become skilled and successful hunters themselves.

They arrive at the sealing ground as the winter day breaks, and immediately start the search for a seal hole; for upon the finding of this depends the comfort and sustenance of the whole family for days to come, and the succour of the families of anybody else who may not be in luck, but who may return home, cheery as ever, but empty handed.

All around as far as the eye can see is a vast, white expanse, utterly featureless and monotonous save for an occasional iceberg or a ridge of hummocky ice. Behind is the white line of the broken coast; ahead is a dark mist, marking the floe edge and the open sea; and above all, the twilight sky, darker than the drear white world, of the Arctic winter. To a European, the effect of such a scene is crushing in its melancholic immensity, its frozen immobility and silence. Not so to the native. He remains irrepressibly cheerful, his whole soul preoccupied with the necessities of his larder, buoyed up with the hope and the tireless patience of the sealer. He goes search-

ing for his blow hole. The slight indication for which his practised eye is scanning every foot of the ice is a faintly rounded bump with a small opening in it no bigger than a shilling. As soon as he catches sight of one of these he is reassured, and prepares to wait—quite indefinitely, and perfectly still—for what must presently happen.

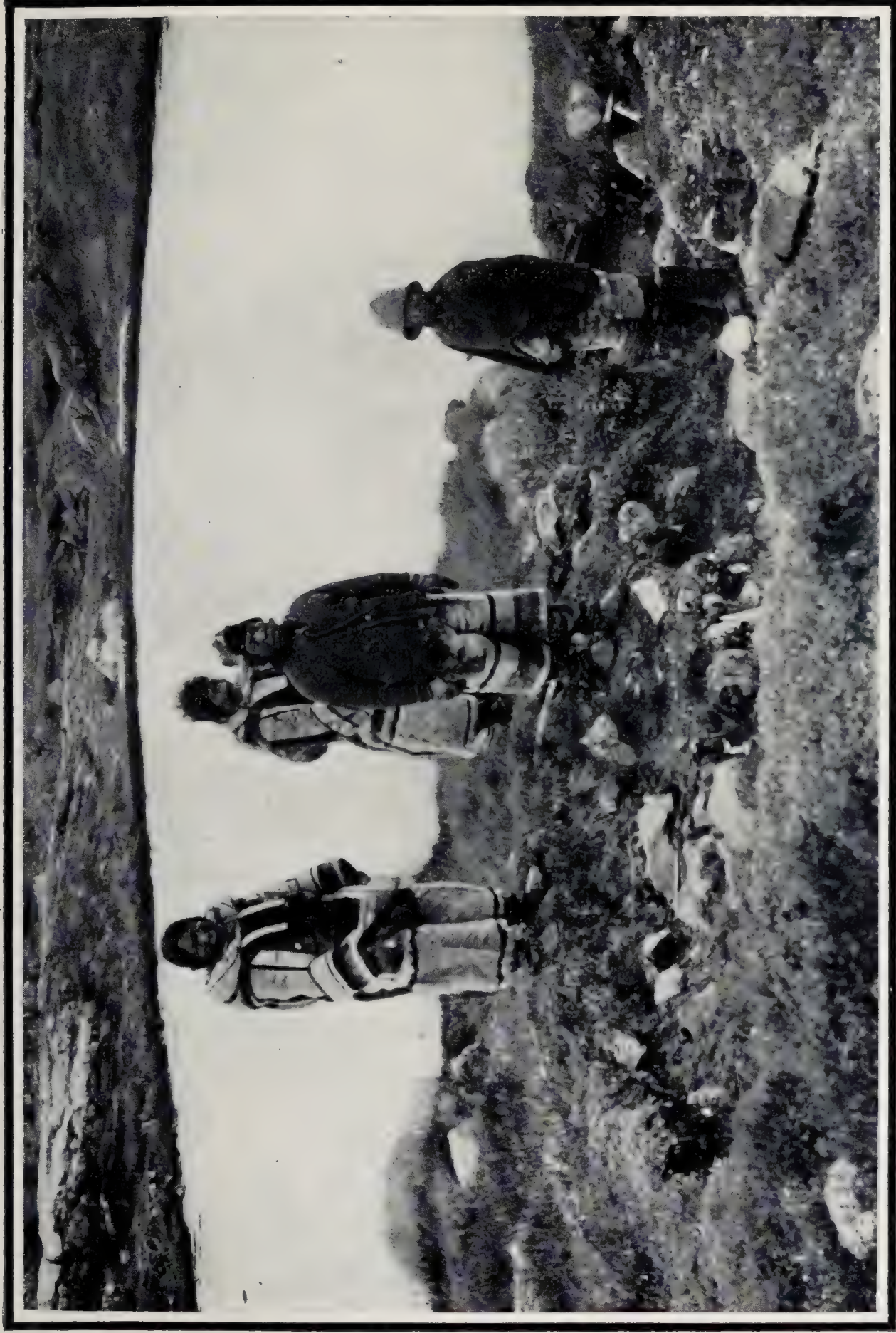
The seal is a warm-blooded creature, whose need of air to breathe is urgent and frequent. As soon as the sea begins to freeze, the animal takes precautions against being imprisoned and drowned under the ice. It makes a series of breathing holes over the whole area of its feeding ground below. If one or another of these freezes over again, there are the rest; or if an enemy is encountered at one hole, it can have recourse to another. The seal comes methodically after feeding to each blow hole in turn, and keeps it open by scratching away any newly formed ice threatening to close it up. It puts its nose to the opening and breathes long, deeply, and luxuriously, before diving once more.

The hunter knows every move in the game.

Having discovered a seal hole, he provides himself with a block of snow to sit upon, and prepares for a lengthy wait. He takes up his patient station facing the wind (for the seal has the keenest scent, and the Eskimo is, to say the least of it, somewhat smelly), thrusts his feet and legs into a deerskin bag, tucks his hands into the sleeves of his jacket, lays his spear across his knees, and watches—it may be for hours—

motionless as a rock, for sound travels under the ice and the prey must not be warned. A sealer will wait all day and all night, if need be, at the blow hole. If he should fall asleep, he runs the risk of being maimed for life with frostbite.

Presently he hears the expected scratching, and the scraping of the paws of a seal coming up to breathe. Silently he prepares for action. Now is the critical time. First, there comes the expulsion of the foul air long pent in the animal's lungs; but not yet dare the watcher make the slightest sign. The seal withdraws its head and listens intently for a possible foe. Reassured after a few moments, it again approaches the hole with the little dome of snow and, putting its head well up, takes a long, reviving breath. This is the hunter's moment. His hand slips to his spear (his fur garments making no sound), grips it, and poises it with unerring aim. With one swift downward thrust, the weapon is through the blow hole and its barb buried deep in the neck of the seal. When the eye is true and quick the stroke is seldom missed. The animal immediately dives, taking out the barb and line. The Eskimo seal spear has a movable head or barb, which is attached to the shaft in such a way that it becomes detached from it the moment an animal is struck, and remains firmly embedded in the flesh with the long line of white whale hide attached, while the spear itself floats on the water or falls on the ice as the case may be. The hunter instantly recovers this shaft, and now the butt comes into play.



THE RETURN OF THE SUCCESSFUL SEAL HUNTER IN SPRINGTIME.

His wife and friends dragging the seal to his tupik, where it will be cut up and all will be invited to the evening meal.

The hole is quickly enlarged and the prey hauled up and killed, there on the ice, with one quick stroke.

It is but the work of a few minutes for the dog team (which had been driven away back from the hole as soon as it was discovered), to come racing up. A shout summons every other hunter within sight, and quicker than it takes to tell, there is a concourse of fur-clad figures, the seal is cut open, and a rib, dripping with the fresh, hot blood, is presented to each by way of an invigorating snack. The carcase is soon skewered together again by means of the long ivory pins carried by the hunter, and loaded on to the sled, when the successful "outfit," bidding a cheery adieu to the others, strikes off then and there for home, rejoicing in the thought of fresh supplies of meat and blubber, and another skin added to the family stores.

When the sealing season fully sets in, sealing camps are formed far out on the ice at sea, over the sealing grounds, and thither the younger half of the entire Eskimo community resorts for a month or more. A new, roughly fashioned, temporary village quickly springs up, and all the usual household goods are installed in readiness for the season's work on the spot. The camp *igloos* are much smaller and less ambitious dwellings than those on shore, their sole object being to provide a few weeks' shelter. There is none of the home life of the permanent village. The men and boys are away all day long, and the women spend all their time preparing and drying the

skins and keeping the cooking pot going. Water is obtained either from the snow lying deep on the surface of the ice, or from ice from the nearest berg. From early morning till late at night the camp resounds with the crack of whips, the shouts of the dog-team drivers, the gruff voices of men and the shrill voices of boys, as they drive hither and thither, quartering the expanse of the sealing grounds in search of the blow holes. Every foot of the way is closely scanned. Suddenly a deep "Ugh!" from the hunter announces the saucer-like depression in the snow which tells him that a seal cavern is beneath.

Here and there a solitary sportsman with but one dog on a long line sets out on his own, over the sealing ground. He trudges observantly along, urging the dog to ferret about and pick up the scent of the quarry beneath the snow. "White Fang," nothing loth, sets all his sharp, trained wits to work, and presently starts snuffling and scratching, like any terrier at a rat hole, and the hunter knows he has come upon his prey.

To understand the activities of the sealing camp it is necessary to know something of the habits of the seal in the breeding season. For some time before the baby creature is born, for instance, the mother has been preparing a house for it. She does not give birth in the water nor on the surface of the snow, for the obvious reasons of the cold and of the possible presence of enemies. She makes a hole in the sea ice big enough for her to get through, and proceeds to

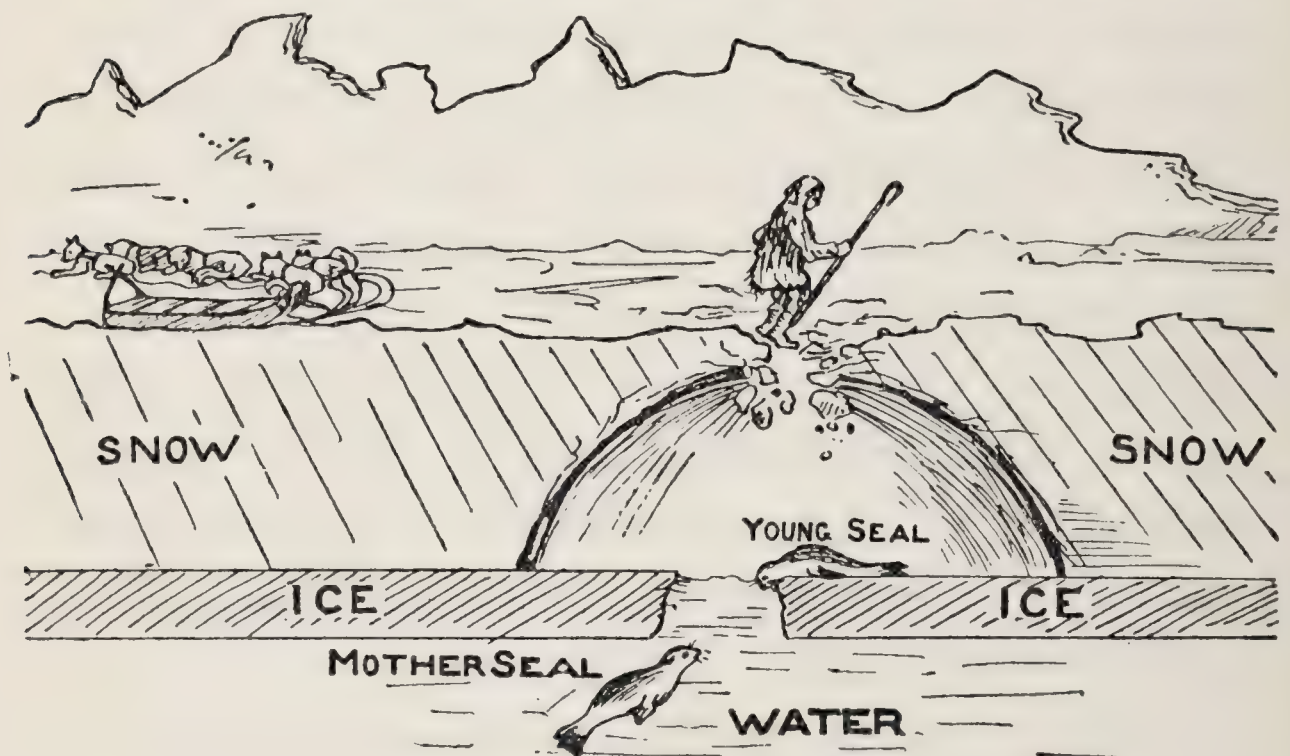
scrabble out an airy cavern in the deep layer of snow above, leaving a sort of shelf or flooring of clear ice upon which she can lie in safety and bring her young to birth. This place is—comparatively—warm, dry, and even cosy. It is within immediate reach of the hole through which she can dive back into the water at a moment's alarm, and it is almost completely hidden from above. The baby is left in this cavern while the mother seeks food, and it lives there until, after a series of short educational excursions in the water, it has learnt to hunt for itself, and its lungs have accustomed themselves to the conditions of the adult seal's existence.

Frequently indeed the baby gets drowned! The mother may have heard some noise above which has alarmed her. Fearing danger, she has thrust her head up through the diving hole, caught hold of the young one, and hastily retreated with it to a depth unsuitable for its tender lungs, with a sad and fatal result.

The Eskimo sealer knows all this natural history, as he knows that of every other denizen of the Arctic, and founds upon it his methods in hunting.

Directly he has detected the locality of a seal's nursing cavern under his feet, either by the presence of a slight depression in the snow, or by the pointing of the dog, he arms himself with a nixie, or hook on the end of a long shaft, and gathering himself together makes a tremendous jump into the air, coming down with all his weight and force upon the spot. He

jumps again and again, until at last the snow caves in and blocks the hole below, cutting off the baby seal's retreat into the sea beneath. Then he prods and probes among the débris of the cavern for the imprisoned creature, locates it, hooks it out, and kills it with one blow on the head. After that, there is the mother to be caught. She is probably lurking under the ice nearby. So, before he kills the little



YOUNG SEAL HUNTING IN MAY.

An Eskimo hunter breaking through into a young seal's dwelling. This is done by jumping upon the top of the dwelling and breaking in the roof which, falling down, fills up the hole in the ice and prevents the mother from rescuing the young one. The hunter then inserts his hook and secures the young seal.

one, the hunter ties his sealing line to one of its flippers and pushes it through the diving hole into the water. The mother at once tries to come to its rescue, only to encounter her own devoted death. She, too, is hooked, dragged out, and despatched.

The seal has other enemies to contend with besides man. The bear has a keen scent, a heavy paw, a huge

appetite, and a peculiar relish for her young. He, too, wanders out on the sealing grounds at the proper season, and having found a cavern, sets his two huge forepaws on the snow and, with one mighty push, breaks it all in. He easily hooks the helpless little creature beneath, and devours it with ursine relish.

Or it may be that an arctic fox decides to spend a day seal hunting. He glides over the snow, an almost invisible shape, like nothing so much as a white wraith of the desolation around. His scent having guided him to a likely spot, and being unable, like the bear, to do his housebreaking by mere brute force, he adopts a peculiarly wicked plan of his own. Planting all four feet together pivot-fashion, he spins himself round and round, his claws boring a way through the snow, until he corkscrews his unwelcome presence into the seal's retreat. The baby, again, falls a helpless victim.

This seal hunting of the tribesmen, far out at sea in the camp on the ice, is not without its dangers, as the following tale will show.

For several weeks all had gone prosperously with the sealers. The weather had been good, and the young seals plentiful. Loaded sleds had been continually going to and fro between the winter village on shore and the village on the ice, bearing meat and skins to the old folk at home. Contentment and jollity reigned, for had not the Conjurors guaranteed prosperity and good luck, and were their prophecies not amply fulfilled?

But, one day, the sky became overcast. Hour after hour it grew more heavily banked with forbidding cloud, whilst from seaward came a low roar, the pre-sage of an arctic storm. The sealers hastily retreated to their dwellings, and blocked up their doors, and prepared to wait. Evening drew nigh, and the tempest rose. An occasional quiver of the icy floor told of the pounding of heavy breakers at the floe edge, and a portentous shiver now and again spoke of masses of it being broken away.

With the indifference which comes of familiarity with danger, these hardy northern folk stayed out there in camp, on the very edge as it were of death; and as the night drew on, merely rolled themselves in their fur blankets and went to sleep, confident that the morning would see an abatement in the storm. Nevertheless, it went on increasing and grew more and more violent. The shivering dogs scratched holes for themselves in the snow on the lee side of the *igloos*, and buried themselves as deeply as they could. At length the Eskimo instinct of peril was aroused, and an intuitive sense of the full extent of the catastrophe at hand (a sense not developed to any marked degree among civilised peoples), roused the entire camp.

It began when a woman and her husband waked suddenly, feeling that all was not well. They looked round the *igloo*, yet could detect nothing amiss. Its other occupants slept soundly. There was the thud and the roar of the wild hurricane without, but all seemed snug within.

And yet—what was that? Even as the goodwife watched and waited, there came another of those strange quiverings in the ice, and the cooking pot suspended over the lamp began to swing. The awful thing told its own tale! The ice on which the camp was built was breaking up beneath it, and every soul was faced with imminent and deadly peril. The sea was fathoms deep below; the land a long distance away! Darkness and the savage uproar without made chaos of the arctic night.

Then indeed the ice gave way, and in a moment became nothing but a pounding, grinding mass of detached fragments, on which the wrecked camp tossed. The sealers, roughly awakened, smashed down their doors, or with knife and spear cut a way out of their *igloos* as best they might, and got clear of them, followed by the women and children. With the strange but unerring instinct of primitive man, they headed, even in that tumult and pitchy darkness, for the unseen land; and then began a perilous race with death and the spirits of the storm.

They had to spring from floe to floe, following each other, encouraging and helping the women, finding a way where from moment to moment there might be none, risking everything at every leap.

Among those in the crowd was Kownak, a young hunter, and his new made wife. The girl was only then recovering from a recent sickness, and her strength completely failed her. The two started, indeed, on their ghastly journey like the rest; but before

half the distance to safety was accomplished the young wife—wet, terrified, and weak—sank down exhausted and beaten on the bitter ice with a cry of despair. Kownak lifted her up and bore her on in his arms. But the rocking of the ice flung them both into the sea time and again, despite his utmost endeavour. Once he managed to grip the edge of the floe, whilst the girl scrambled back on to it again over his shoulders. He stripped off his coat to wrap it round her in the frantic effort to keep her from freezing, and tried again to lift and carry her. But it was an impossible feat on the tossing, glassy ice. She struggled to rise and stagger on, but could endure no more and sank down again, unconscious, to be frozen to death within another minute.

Kownak could not tear himself from the body until it had become nothing but an indistinguishable mass, one with the ice. Only then did he remember his own desperate plight, and make a final effort to save himself. After incredible exertions and hairbreadth escapes, at last he reached the shore, black with frost-bite, and joined the surviving remnant of the sealing camp. The merest handful of the people had outlived that terrible night.



TWO WOMEN IN SUMMER DRESS.

They are wearing their inner jackets only. The row of beads on the front of one of the dresses is made by the woman herself. She makes a rough mould in a piece of ivory or bone and drops lead into it. They are very proud of their beads, for this purpose they will take lead as part payment for work done.

CHAPTER VII

WOMANHOOD IN THE ARCTICS.

IN the meantime, the women, left in the village on shore, have been far from idle. As soon as the husband has gone off for the day the wife sets about her domestic affairs. First, she rolls up the bedding and tidies the sleeping bench. The next job is to sweep the hoar-frost from the window and the cupola, to prevent the dripping of any moisture, and then to sweep up the floor—littered, likely enough, with the remains of a good feed overnight. These duties are performed with a brush made of the outspread wings of a duck or raven; it might almost be called a double-bladed brush. The backs are sewn together and the upper bones form the handle. Such a contrivance is a very handy affair altogether, and will last quite a long time.

The next task is to prepare a quantity of blubber for oil. This is pulped with a bone hammer or *koutak*, and the fuel so obtained is suspended over the shallow lamps in such a way as to dip into them and keep them supplied. New wick is fashioned from dried moss and cotton plant trimmed upon the lamps. Next comes the stew for supper. The Eskimos have only one way of cooking meat, and that is stewing it in the

stone "kettles" already described. These are partly filled with sea water for the sake of the salt, a quantity of seal's blood is added, and then comes the meat. The whole thing hangs simmering over the lamps all day, and by the time the men come back at night a reeking hot meal is ready, rich, nourishing, and as tender as a sharp-set hunter could desire.

Water is the next consideration. The Eskimo housewife hauls it in skin buckets from the nearest stream, bailing it up through a hole in the ice; or, failing that, she brings in the ice itself, or snow, and sets it to melt over a spare lamp. These people are thirsty souls, and water is hard to come by in the winter. Every drop that can be obtained is used for drinking or cooking, so that washing (except the hands and face), is dispensed with perforce of arctic circumstance. Fresh water ice melts more quickly than beaten snow, and it is an interesting fact that an iron or tin pot used for melting the former will last much longer than for melting snow. The latter process causes it to become quickly pitted with spots of rust and perforated. Aluminium vessels last the longest. In the old days—i.e., prior to the establishments of trading posts—the Eskimos had no utensils of any sort except those of native manufacture from bone, or stone, or ivory. Nowadays they have steel-tipped spears, iron nails, and tinware for cooking purposes.

Perhaps the next most important employment of the feminine portion of the community is the prepara-

tion of skins, the softening of leather, and the finer animal tissues, the washing, drying, and stretching of gut, and the manufacture of the marvellously fine sinew used for sewing and stitchery. All this includes the making of tents and clothing. The old women help the housewives as far as they are able, and the girls watch and learn, with a view to rendering themselves eligible in the eyes of the young men as accomplished brides-to-be. The women are perpetually employed chewing the edges of skins and leathers to make them pliable and soft for sewing. This process tends to wear down the teeth to very unsightly stumps.

The heavy work is done by the hale and hearty, who leave only the lighter tasks, such as the tending of the lamps and the minding of the house, to the older folk. Womanlike all the world over, the crones love to get together and indulge in unlimited gossip. All the women, indeed, pay a constant round of visits, and gathering, now here, now there, sit about smiling and gossiping, as is their wont from the tropics to the pole.

The Eskimo are a genial, jovial, peaceable people, among whom quarrelling is a crime, and he or she who disturbs the general peace is a villain of the deepest dye. So, whatever else comes of all the gossip, it is not—in an Eskimo village—malevolence, backbiting and spite. They talk—these fur-clad, hard-working women—of their last year's journeyings, who and what they saw and heard, of their trials and vexations, of their children and relations and

pliable

husbands—each one's contribution to the conversation being punctuated by a chorus of "*Ah, Ah's,*" "*Elarle! Elarle!*" (Indeed! Yes!) from the rest.

Suddenly, however, just when their enjoyment may be at its height, the children's cry of "*Kumokse! Kumokse! Netsérkpok!*"—(A sled, a sled! He's got a seal!) breaks up the gathering in excited confusion. There is a rush, each wife to her own home. Cries of joy and anticipation fill the air, and the whole village is stirred with cheerful and prosperous bustle. The hunters are returning, and fresh supplies are at hand. Very soon the cracking of the dog whips is heard, shouts of command, barks and howls; and the teams appear, scrambling over the *sigjak* (the broken ice along the shore), with their welcome loads. Quickly the harness is thrown off and safely bestowed, the lines and everything eatable being carried into the *sukso*; the dogs are fed and quieted, and curl round and go to sleep in the snow.

Then comes the evening meal. The stewpot is taken from the slings and set in front of the mistress of the *igloo*. The sturdy men and children crowd round her and each one is served with a generous piece of sealmeat. They hold it in their hands to eat. Each bronzed or wind-blackened face glows with enjoyment and contentment in the homely lamp-light, and an atmosphere of unfeigned goodwill and cheer dominates the little group. The hungry folk whose husbands and fathers have not been successful all day simply distribute themselves through the

village, and share the food of the lucky. The captor of to-day may return empty handed to-morrow, when he may look for hospitality to his guests of to-night.

As soon as the meal in the pot is finished, the soup is poured out into a drinking bowl and handed round, each one taking a good pull in turn. The air soon reeks—the tight-packed assemblage of unwashed humanity, the stench of seal oil and blubber, the strong odours from the pot and the exhalations of garments spread out on the racks to dry, all contribute to the malodorous atmosphere. But what of that to those accustomed to nothing else, to whom the whole means warmth and plenty and the nearness of his own, in the frozen immensity of the awful arctic world without?

As soon as the meal is done the day's catch of seals is cut up. Each animal is placed on its back on the floor, opened and dismembered, and pieces of the meat and blubber are given to the needy. Open hospitality is the law of the land in the Arctics. Travelers, whether native or European, are always sure of welcome and shelter on reaching an Eskimo village. On these occasions the stranger is always the first to be served from the generous family stew.

This sanguinary and odoriferous business being despatched, and the neighbours having taken themselves off, the door is fixed for the night—the door being a slab of snow cut to fit the main entrance to the *igloo*, and set on one side during the day. The lamps are trimmed to a low flame, wet clothes are

spread on the drying frames above them, and each member of the family rolls up in a fur blanket on the sleeping bench and so goes to bed. Occasionally the mother wakes up, to trim the lamps and turn the clothes during the night. She will be the first to wake and rise in the morning, since it is part of the woman's work "which is never done," to rub and soften the leathern clothing of her good man and the boys, which had hardened in drying while they slept.

Before the advent of the white man and his methods, the Eskimo used to start a fire by means of "firesticks." The writer has seen this done repeatedly at the present day. An oblong piece of wood with a depression made in it to hold the tinder (a mixture of dried moss and cotton plant), receives the spindle. Another small piece of wood, placed on top of the latter, is held in position by the teeth and pressed down firmly upon it. The spindle is made to rotate rapidly by means of a rough bow until a spark, caused by the friction, starts up in the tinder. This is gently blown to a flame, and the fire is kindled. Nowadays, steel, or pieces of iron, are used in place of the driftwood board and spindle, especially on hunting expeditions; for although matches have found their way into the Eskimo *igloo*, they are costly, and apt to get damp.

There seems to be a happy sort of sex equality among these people, or perhaps it should rather be said that a mutually agreeable division of equally essential labours cause the men and women to live

more on a common footing than they seem to do among many other uncivilised folk. Old women, widows, and orphan girls, never want for protection and sustenance, so long as the rest can shelter and support them. The Eskimo are a very improvident people, never taking thought for the hungry morrow when they can feast to-day; but so long as the good things last, so long as they are to be had, the old and helpless of both sexes are never neglected. If a time should come when there arises a question of superfluous mouths to fill, the old people go into a sort of voluntary retreat in their own houses, and willingly die the death of starvation. More will be said on this subject elsewhere.

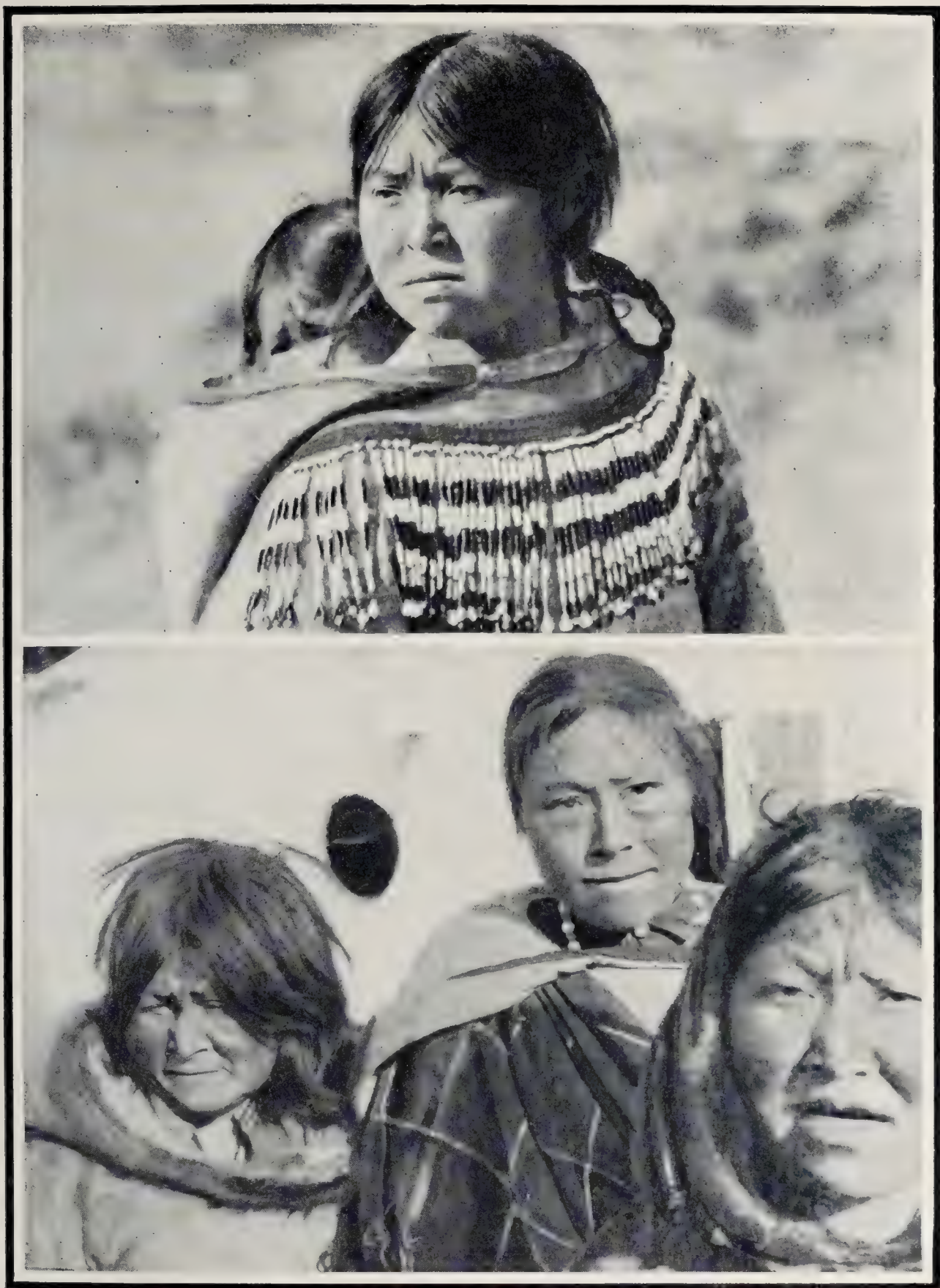
On one dreadful occasion an Eskimo woman was betrayed by force of circumstances into an act of cannibalism. This woman was a tall, commanding figure from the south coast, with a grave, intelligent face. She was an excellent huntress, equally at home with gun or spear. She could wield her needle, too, and together with her husband, was a first-rate worker and much respected by all the tribe.

A party of women, including herself and her baby, were travelling to a trading station. Their sled was well provisioned and their dogs in good condition, and the route lay over mountains and valleys, and across all the intervening fiords and bays. Soon after they started things began to go wrong. The weather changed and a wind got up, bearing snow. Storm after storm swept the country, through which the

travellers could scarcely force their way. The dogs sank to their shoulders in the deep drift, and at last could make no further progress at all. The little expedition called a halt. They built a sleeping place and prepared to wait till the violence of the weather abated. But, as day after day went howling by, each as impossible as the last, the stock of rations became exhausted, and the whole party reached the verge of starvation.

The Eskimo woman from the south fell ill, in consequence of the hardships and privations, and lost consciousness. While she happened to be in this state, a council was held by the others of the party, who decided to keep life going by killing and eating the child. This was accordingly done, and as soon as she could be partially roused, a portion was given to the famished mother. Not knowing what it was she did, she ate the meat—and survived. Some time afterwards the forlorn band was rescued by some hunters and taken to their camp, and only then the woman learnt the truth about her supposedly dead baby. Years after the horrible thing occurred the writer met her and had the story from her own lips.

Women and their adventures figure largely in Eskimo folk tales. One of them might almost point to a feminist movement in the Arctics! Two brides, it is narrated, ran away from their homes before their very first children ever saw the light. After awhile the fathers went in search of their lost daughters. When the girls found they were discovered they wept



A YOUNG WIFE WITH HER BABY IN HER HOOD.

The ornamentation on the front of her jacket is strings of various coloured beads, much prized by the women.

ESKIMO FAMILY GROUP.

The Eskimo marry at an early age, generally at about 14 years of age, the marriage being arranged between the parents of the parties.

bitterly, and declared themselves most unwilling to return to their husbands. The fathers, however, were quite relieved to find them comfortably off where they were, and having stayed a couple of "sleeps" in their daughters' house, returned home without the brides. When they got back to the tribe they had this amazing thing to tell—that two women without the company of any men, lived happily all by themselves, and were never in want!

There is a charming little story of a lonely woman who owned a bear cub, and loved it and brought it up like a child and called it her son. The bear repaid her devotion, and supported her by his prowess in hunting so well that the rest of the villagers grew jealous and planned to kill him. So, conscious of their evil designs, he departed, almost as much to the grief of the children of the village as to that of his "mother." He never ceased, however, to repay her love, and continued out on the ice floes to catch seals for her support.

The gruesome story of the murderess *Toodlânak* has never hitherto—so far as the writer can ascertain—been included in any ethnologist's collection of the Eskimo legends.

It is narrated by the Ancient Ones that there lived this *Toodlânak*, who was an evil spirit in female disguise. She had a large house (*igloovegak*) built by the side of the route used by hunters going inland after deer. It was far up country, many days' journey either from the sea or from the pastures of the in-

terior. The house was large and comfortable, and *Toodlânak* had a reputation for hospitality. She loved to entertain any who passed that way and to give them food and shelter for the night. She allotted to them the best rugs and the most comfortable part of the sleeping bench. Presently, however, it began to be noticed that few if any of these hunters returned. At last the brother of one of these inexplicably missing men determined to look into things. He started out with a companion, and in due course both reached the half-way house. Out came *Toodlânak*, as usual, all smiles and amiability, inviting them to enter and refresh and rest themselves there for the night. They did so, but the suspicious young man kept his wits about him, and never relaxed a sharp look-out on his hostess. He had a notion that she knifed her guests in their slumber.

Unknown to *Toodlânak*, he secreted a flat stone within the bosom of his tunic (the *netseak*), and, rolling himself in his blanket, lay flat on his back apparently in deep sleep. His hostess had also retired to rest, and seemed also quite dead to the world. But, about midnight, he saw her rise by the dim light of the lamp, and creep over to his companion where he also lay asleep on the bench. The movement betrayed the fact that the awful creature had a knife-like tail with which she struck her victim through the chest and killed him. She then crept stealthily towards the watcher, and would have served him the same way but that he was ready for her. The vicious tail struck,

indeed, at his chest, but shivered on the hidden stone, broke off, and left *Toodlânak* defenceless. The hunter sprang up and killed her on the spot. He searched all over the place, and found the remains of innumerable victims, and their property hoarded away. He broke down the house, buried his luckless companion, and returned home with the news that at last the country was ridded of its pest and might be safely travelled.

CHAPTER VIII

CLOTHING—BOAT BUILDING

IN the preceding chapters little but an outline has been given of the activities of the day in an Eskimo encampment. Boat building is one of the occupations in which men and women jointly engage; but before this is described at the length it requires, there is much to be said about the dressing and fashioning of the various skins which form the most important item of Eskimo economy.

The Eskimo woman values none of her possessions more than the *ooloo*, a short-handled knife shaped like a small half-moon turf cutter, chiefly used for paring off the inner membrane of the stout sealskin for the lighter hangings of the summer tent, but of universal utility. With it she cuts out her garments or dismembers a seal. In addition to this she has steel or ivory needles and a thimble.

The Eskimo have no woven fabrics or European clothes until they come in contact with the whites, and—perhaps unfortunately—acquire the beginnings of a civilisation alien to the natural evolution and necessities of their lives.

Their own native dress consists entirely of deer-skins for winter use and sealskins for the summer.

Both sets are warmly lined with fur. The deerskins employed as clothing are the summer and autumn hides; those flayed in the winter are reserved for the *kaksak* or sleeping blankets. The men's and women's tunics are lined either with fawn skins or the summer skins with the hair on. No underclothing is required, fur always being worn next to the skin. The man's jacket is looser in shape than the woman's, and the hood (*nessak*) fits closely round the face. The woman's garment is quite different. It has shorter, baggy sleeves, is large and roomy at the back, fitting, however, tightly to the waist; it has a hood (*amout*) big enough for two heads, a short stomacher-like apron about twelve inches long in front, and a lengthy tail reaching to the heels behind. The Eskimo women carry their babies on their backs in this queer jacket. The child has no clothing on it, but it keeps admirably warm next the fur-clad mother. Its feet rest on her waist line and its head peers from out of the capacious hood over her shoulder.

Both sexes wear short, wide trousers. For foot-gear they have long deerskin stockings like Lifeguardsmen's boots, with the hair turned next the skin, reaching well up over the knees under the pants. Over these is worn a sock like a Turkish slipper, made from the skin of the Large Glaucus Gull, the feathers being inside; and over this again goes a short sock of deerskin, with the hair turned outwards and upwards so as to enable the long boot, or *kummik*, to pull on easily. This boot is tied on below the knee and round the

ankle. The sole is made of the leather of the large ground seal, with the hair shaved off, and the leg is the skin of deer's legs stoutly stitched together.

The women take immense pride in the cut, fit, workmanship and ornamentation of their dresses, showing no little taste and discrimination in the management of design and ornament. The various furs are introduced in lines, panels and patterns, with an eye to colour and texture a skilled furrier might envy.

Prior to the advent of Europeans to the Arctics, fringes of deerskin were the most popular form of ornament for clothing; but to-day the Eskimo women are passionately fond of elaborate beadwork. The beads are of European manufacture, but the design in which they are applied is native. The favourite beads are small and brightly coloured. The native sempstress will also sew two or three coins down the front of the inside jacket and down the tail of the dress, or even the bowls of a few spoons. These clink as they walk, and greatly delight their wearers.

The Eskimo tailor has a wonderfully correct eye, and can so scrutinise a figure as to be able to turn out a well-fitting suit of skins without taking a single measurement, or "trying on."

The men's clothes are plain, without ornamentation, and the fashion of them does not vary with the season. In summer they are lined with the white skins of the baby seal, which are as soft and fleecy as lambs' wool; in winter, with the skins of the fawn, which are very soft and warm.

The Eskimo housewife prides herself greatly upon her store of skins. These, and the soapstone cooking utensils, and the carefully housed poles for the summer *tupik*, dogs, sled, and kyak, constitute the wealth of a native family. Fine sewing thread is made from the sinew of deer's legs, scraped and dried. For stouter purposes, seal sinew is used. Eskimo stitching requires to be seen to be appreciated. It is amusing to note that the age of a child can be told at a glance by the length of the tail of its little jacket.

Apropos generally of domestic tastes, a word must be added on the women's hairdressing. The hair is generally parted down the centre and plaited on either side of the face, the two plaits being looped under the ears (remniscent of the early Victorian style!) and tied in a knot at the back. In some tribes the women gather their hair up and bind it all into a stiff vertical cone on the top of the head. They weave into this stubborn erection every hair which comes out, so that in time a woman's age may be guessed by the size of her topknot. It used to be the fashion in bygone days to tattoo the face with linear designs, but this has now practically died out.

It is a common error of writers upon the Eskimo folk to assert that they oil themselves to keep out the cold, that they drink oil as a food, and revel in grease generally. Nothing of this is correct. The dirtier and the greasier a man is, the colder he is; so every effort is made—not after cleanliness exactly, as that is an impracticable standard—to keep grease from

the clothes and the person. When engaged in preparing or cleaning anything very oily, the women remove part of their dress to save it, and afterwards rub away as much of the grease as possible from their hands and arms. Seal oil and melted blubber act as strong purgatives, hence it would be impossible to use them as drink, besides they are required for the lamps.

Perhaps the next most important business of the Eskimo women, after cooking and making the clothes, is the preparation of skins for the two types of boat in use on the coast. This entails considerable labour and skill. The men are responsible for the framework.

The kyak—a creation as truly national to these intrepid coasters as the snowshoe may be to the Indian, the ski to the Norwegian, and the alpenstock to the Swiss mountaineer—is a covered canoe, graceful as a fish, for use at sea. It can be handled in the roughest weather. It consists of a light framework, formerly of whalebone, but now generally of driftwood, fastened together with thongs of sealskin. It is from eighteen to twenty feet in length, strong and elastic to a degree, and entirely covered with skins, almost resembling a torpedo in shape, with long, tapering extremities. There is a small circular opening amidships, where the kyaker sits, fitting closely round his body. In rough weather he wears a waterproof jacket (of seal gut), the hood fitting tightly round his face and the sleeves to his wrists. The lower edge



(1) A KAYAK. Fully equipped for hunting. (2) THE LIGHT FRAMEWORK OF (1) over which skin is stitched. (3) MODEL OF A UMIK. The sail is made of seal intestines. (4) AN OKUSHUK. A cooking-pot with drinking-bowl, made of soapstone.

of this comes over the opening in the canoe and is laced round it, so that man and craft are fairly one.

The Rev. A. L. Fleming, formerly a naval architect, informed the writer that the lines of the kyak are perfect, and from the point of view of sea-going architecture could not be improved. The Baffin Land kyak is broader than the Greenland type. The latter is much narrower, and requires great skill to handle. Readers of Arctic literature will recall Nansen's account of the extraordinary feats performed by the Eskimo on the west coast of Greenland in manœuvring these canoes. The Baffin Islanders are also very skilful. They can right themselves, if completely overturned, by a peculiar quick jerk of the paddle. The kyak cannot fill, should the waves wash right over it. It probably comes nearer the ideal of an unsinkable boat than many a more ambitious construction. It would be hard to say, as between hunting and fishing (the staple business of their lives), which is the characteristic national "sport" of the Eskimo; but certainly no one not born and bred to the handling of the kyak could acquire the native degree of ease and daring.

The sealskins for these canoes are bleached. Either they are scalded, or tied in bundles and hung up in a warm atmosphere to ferment. This process is allowed to go on for a week or two, until the stench becomes unbearable. When taken down and shaved with the *ooloo*, the black epidermis comes away with the hair, leaving the skins beautifully white. The inner mem-

branes are left intact. The next step is to stitch the skins together. Bleached hides may be made to alternate with unbleached ones, by way of ornament; or the entire covering may be merely black or brown.

The thread is sinew from seal flesh, since it must be derived from the same source as the skins, to ensure the same degree of shrinking and stretching. The seams are double stitched, first through the skin only, leaving the membrane untouched, and then over-sewing the latter, so as to make them perfectly watertight. The moistened skins are then loosely applied to the framework; as they shrink and dry they fit to it exactly, and form a light, drum-tight covering over the whole. It is part of the man's job to fit the wooden rim to the opening on top, and to make the loops which serve to secure his weapons.

He carries a three-pronged bird spear on the left hand side in front of him; on the right is his sealing spear, and between the two is a small round tray for the coiled seal line fixed to the detachable spearhead. Behind him on the left is his nixie or hook, on the right a heavy harpoon for striking walrus or the larger creatures he may encounter, between the two and immediately behind him an inflated sealskin with the end of his sealing line attached. Thus equipped, the canoe is complete, a thing of pride to its owner, which will last all his life and be handed down to his sons and their sons after him.

The sealing spear has an ivory (or nowadays a steel) butt for breaking ice, and acts as an ice chisel.

Its shaft consists of a piece of driftwood, its long keen point is made from part of the jawbone or rib of the whale, and its detachable barbed head is of steel or ivory. The long line attached to this is a stout strip of white whale hide. The harpoon, too, is of wood and ivory, as also is the long hunting knife and the small kit of lesser tools without which the hunter seldom moves. All these things are made during the endless winter evenings, while sitting round the seal oil lamps in the *igloo*, or on stormy days when the Arctic blizzard obliterates the world without. (There is an interesting collection of Eskimo dresses and implements and utensils to be seen in the Ethnological Gallery at the British Museum; but perhaps even more representative a one is that in the Natural History Museum in New York.)

The paddle of the *kyak* is made from a long piece of driftwood. Its proper length is the span of the owner (the full extent of the two extended arms), and half a span again. The blades are narrow, since they are for use at sea, and engage the most skilful attention of the craftsman. Both are tipped with ivory. This *pouteek*, as it is called, can be used as an outrigger. On top of the *kyak*, in front of the man, there are four strongly made loops of hide, the exact width of the blade of the paddle. If the rower wishes to stand up or give play to free movement, to cut up and store away a seal either upon the craft or inside it, he cannot do so without an outrigger or he would simply capsize. To prevent this, he pushes one end

of the paddle into the loops, which hold it fast. The other end, outboard, acts as a counter-weight and exactly balances the canoe. It is then perfectly stable and almost impossible to upset. The dexterity of the kyaker has already been alluded to. He can do anything with this boat. His confidence is so complete that not infrequently, when a heavy wave is atop of him, he will deliberately turn turtle, receive the weight of the water on the bottom, and right himself when the moment is passed.

The *Umiak* is a very different craft, and serves the Eskimo family as a sort of general pantechnicon and removing van. It consists of a large, clumsy framework of wood, covered with the skins of the big ground seal, which are dressed into a thick tough leather. It is really an open sailing boat, capable of carrying perhaps six families and a huge and miscellaneous cargo. It has a square stem and stern and a stumpy mast set well forward in the bows. The large square sail used to be made in earlier days of skin stitched together, or of the intestines of seals blown out and dried, then split open, the long, broad strips alternating with narrow strips of the same material, to ensure equal stretching and shrinking. Nowadays, the natives provide themselves with sail-cloth from the trading posts. The *Umiak* is an unhandy thing to manage, but a good enough boat in a heavy sea way. When on a long voyage up or down the coast or across the bays, in former times, the *Umiak* had a double skin; the outer covering becomes so water-

logged and the movement so sluggish that the whole thing is cast off, and the journey proceeds in the inner, lighter and drier shell. The gut sail requires constant wetting to prevent it splitting into ribbons. This primitive concern is paddled by women when the paddles become necessary, but a man has the steering in his charge.

The oars for the *Umiak* are clumsy things compared to the *kyak* paddle. The blades are rough oblongs of wood, almost like spades, fitted to poles of wood by no means necessarily straight, and bound on by thongs of hide. Sometimes the oar is quite a crooked branch, and a collection of these in the hide hung boat looks about as prehistoric an outfit as Mr. E. T. Reed's most comic imagination might depict among his inimitable parodies of life in the neolithic period.

The *Kyak* and the *Umiak* are the two purely native types of boat used on the Arctic coast. The people, however, are familiar and handy enough nowadays with rowing and sailing boats of European model, wherever they have had the opportunity of using and knowing them. They have other ingenious means of getting about on the water when boats of any description are not to be had at all. The hunter at the edge of the floe can stand and paddle himself away out to sea on a raft or slab of ice detached from the mass; and the deerstalker inland, anxious to cross a sheet of water or a river, will utilise a skin stuffed with dried heather, stoutly bound about with thongs of

hide. He sits on this and skims off as happily as a water-beetle.

The possession of a couple of boats like the foregoing, of a good store of hunting weapons, plenty of skins, a team of well-trained dogs, and two sleds—one, a short, light, travelling affair for hunting, and the other a heavy, long-distance thing for the migrations of the family—constitute the Eskimo householder's wealth, and determine his social precedence and standing in the tribe.

CHAPTER IX

ESKIMO DOGS

THE value to the Eskimo of a good team of about five dogs is equivalent to that of a kyak or a sled, or a reliable gun. To assess it in terms of money would have no significance in a land where utility and necessity alone determine the scale.

The breed is part, or half, wolf. In build, the true Eskimo dog is well formed, almost slim about the hindquarters compared with the rest of his body, the broad and sturdy chest, the strong neck and heavy jaws. His hair is very thick, grey or tawny in colour, and his tail immensely bushy, always carried erectly, curving over the back. He is a different creature to the Samoyede and the Kentucky wolf hound; but probably there is very little to distinguish him from the famous Alaskan "husky" dog of so much literary fame, and the dog of the Labrador.

The dogs in Baffin Land are fed solely on seal flesh, unlike those of the trappers and mail carriers in Alaska and elsewhere, who subsist on a spare and spartan ration of frozen fish. Sacks of chopped seal are always carried on the sleds for the dogs on a winter journey, skin and hair included. They are

wonderful travellers, although the speed with which a trip may be accomplished depends on a good many other factors than dog power alone. In the winter a team may average thirty miles a day; or when conditions of ice and wind are particularly favourable this figure may be doubled.

The Eskimo dogs begin their lives in quite pleasant domestic comfort. They breed in the spring and autumn, and the puppies when born are kept on the sleeping place in the tent or *igloo*, and played with by the women and children in order to accustom them to being handled, and to the scent of human beings. Otherwise they would grow up wild and savage, and a trouble to their owners; and, moreover, might too easily fall a fat and toothsome morsel to any particularly hungry parent or stray wolf about the camp. They are pretty, playful puppies, full of puppy imbecility and fun. When about six weeks old this halcyon period of irresponsibility and shelter comes to an abrupt end. Out go the lot into the hard world, to eat and sleep with the grown-up dogs of the village. And immediately the puppy's training begins. He has a miniature harness made for him and a little sled. The small boys take him in hand. They harness him and drive him about, to his unfathomable disgust and their own diversion, until he becomes used to the process and the various words of command.

As time goes on and he gets a little older his serious education engages the attention of the men. Puppy is harnessed to the *real* sled with the older dogs and

has to help to drag it to the hunting grounds. He objects strongly to leaving the village and what it has of possibilities in the way of tit-bits; but the accustomed orders break over his head in a fearful roar he has never heard before, and he scares up a new obedience. Soon, however, he tries the effect of rebellion, and bolts back on the trail, only to be brought up with a jerk as he reaches the end of his line. He is unceremoniously dragged along on his back, bumping over the rough ice, hating everything and everybody, thinking life not a bit worth living and that the bottom of his world has fallen out. He is rudely brought to! The leader of the team knows what to do. Like a parent spanking a naughty child, the leader sails in, and with many a forceful shake and many a shrewd nip at every tender point, he forces Puppy to take his rightful station in the team and do his best to pull. As he goes back to his own position at the head the Leader just passes word along to the rest to follow his example. They make quite a point of it. As often as the recruit shows a tendency to slack off again, or so much as rolls an eye towards the back trail, they give him a shake up or a nip on the leg to encourage him to proceed, rather, in the right direction. He receives further assistance towards this desirable fixity of purpose by an occasional and painfully adroit flick of the hunter's long driving lash.

A few days of this sort of thing, and the youngster registers the lesson that discretion is the better part of valour. He learns to keep his objections to himself.

The next thing to dawn upon his expanding mind is that dragging heavy weights over the snow makes one's feet uncommonly sore. The older dogs knew that long ago, and lay down before starting in the morning, quite willing to have their boots put on. The dog "boot" is merely an oblong strip of seal leather with two holes for the nails to go through and a couple of thongs to secure the ends round the leg. Everywhere in the Arctics the freight dogs are obliged to have protection for their feet. But Youngster, whose turn for practical investigation has ere this convinced him that nothing is inedible except sticks and stones, retires promptly to the back of the sled or behind the nearest cover, and eats his boots there and then, with early morning relish. The team, to a dog, say nothing, but start off as usual. Youngster licks his lips, curls his tail, and feels good. But after a few miles something of the curl goes out of his tail, his feet become tender and he droops a little. The others plod on; he lags. Instantly comes the sting of the whip or a nip of teeth like a vice. Youngster sprints ahead, only to flag more and more, to limp and crawl at last with the pain in his unprotected, wayworn feet. At the end of the day he simply staggers home, a very sad and sobered Puppy. Leader strolls over, when he thinks he will, looks at him *en passant*, and grins. The culprit adds another mental note to his list of things not good for the digestion. No more boots!

Comes another milestone on the hard path of learning and virtue—pilfering.

Young dogs have to learn that everything on the sled is rigorously taboo—for them. Not to be touched, or so much as sniffed at, on any account whatever. This lesson can only be enforced by many a whipping. For Youngster does so love to stroll past the sled with a preoccupied air, hands in pocket as it were. If he were a human being he would hum a hymn tune. Then, just in that flick of time when no one seems to be looking, he steals a mouthful of seal-meat or blubber. Instantly retribution envelops him. He is severely thrashed. If an experience of this sort repeated once or twice does not cure him his master becomes harsh indeed. The hunter must at all costs gain and keep the ascendancy over his dogs. The thief has his head forced hard back with the mouth wide open, and the man smashes out the two long upper fangs with the back of his hunting knife. That bit of violence completes this part of Youngster's spartan education.

He graduates by learning how to smell for seal holes in the ice, how to tackle a bear, how to defend himself, how to guard the tent or *igloo*, how to brave every extreme of bitter weather. When an Eskimo dog knows all this he becomes a valuable asset to his master.

The Eskimo drives his sled team spread out fan-wise. In this formation they are less likely to break through the snow crust than if driven Indian fashion, one ahead of the other. The tandem style is suitable for wooded country, where there is no room to ex-

pand and where it is imperative to keep to a narrow, perhaps ill-defined trail; but in the Arctics one of the greatest dangers of travelling is to fall into deep snow. Men and dogs alike can be smothered if the crust gives way, for their struggles only cause them to sink the deeper. The dogs are driven by word of command only (i.e., orders to get up, start, straight ahead, right or left, lie down), and by the whip, a tremendously long thong of white whale hide attached to a short stock. Half the art of dog driving consists in the right management of this difficult whip. It has to sail out to touch just the right dog in just the right place, and should crack sharply at the tip. The Leader is the most important, reliable and experienced dog in the team. He is attached to the sled by a longer trace than the others, so that he runs ahead of them, and his position is in the centre. It goes without saying that he is very conscious of his eminence, and gives himself insufferable airs.

In camp the team always sleep curled round in the snow, if not in the porch at least near their master's dwelling, ready for any scraps that may be flung out; and woe betide any other dog who dares to come near, or even essays to pass by! There is a rush and the outsider is severely mauled. Another time, he makes a wide détour. The people never leave the tents without a guard if they can possibly help it. If the man and woman are both away a child is left. The dogs can tell the place is inhabited and refrain from a raid, which would only bring a storm about their ears if

once the alarm were raised. But should the dwelling be empty even for a short time, the dogs at once get to know it—and they know about the stores of meat and oil and blubber inside! Now, the Leader of the team belonging to the establishment is there also as a “guard,” but his argument seems to be that this obligation applies only to outsiders. Having driven off any strange visitants who may venture around, he has no further scruples about helping himself. Moreover, he has a remarkable business head. He believes in letting the others down—for his own advantage and prestige.

As soon, then, as he decides the *tupik* is really empty, he gives one short, deep note, well understood by the others dogs, signifying that the coast is clear. Then he bounces at the tent wall, bursts through it, and snatching the first big mouthful of meat he can get, beats a discreet retreat, leaving the others like thoughtless children to do the work and get themselves into the required mess. They rush in, of course, make hay of the tent, and kick up a tremendous uproar, giving themselves away to the whole village. It does not take long for the natives to cope with the situation. Armed with sticks, they hurry to the spot, and while some penetrate the tent to lay about and drive the dogs outside, others stand ready for the culprits when they come out, to give them such hard blows as will last them well—until next time! Out comes number one, a lump of provender in his teeth. He gets his blows right enough, but sticks to the meat

. . . only to be met, further on by the Leader, a surprised and indignant look on his face, as who should say "What! You at it again! Stealing, when you ought to be on guard! And having the effrontery to try to pass Me with your plunder! Put that meat down instantly and I'll take charge of it! If you want any more, go back and get it."

There is no getting past this. The delinquent is bowled out, rolled over, bullied until he loses his head and his booty into the bargain. He is glad to escape alive. He breaks away at last, frantically licking his wounds. Whereupon Leader absent-mindedly eats the meat and sits down to await another scrap from the next offender. He calls this keeping his end up with the mob.

On one lurid occasion of this sort, all the canine raiders had escaped from the tent but one, a small fat puppy. He happened to be in the place at the time and quite enjoyed entering into the spirit of the thing—meant to do his best like the others. So he climbed into the lamp, freshly replenished with oil, and fitted it so exactly, lubricating himself from head to foot, that he stuck *in situ* to be caught, but looking quite proud of his position and feeling altogether grown up. He was soaked in oil and grime; oil dripped from his mouth, and the laugh on his face plainly said, "My! This is good! Why didn't I think of it before?" He was summarily pulled both out of the lamp and out of his complacency. Infantile yells outside told of early correction being administered and a lesson in honesty

enforced. After that his mother took him in hand and licked him clean.

It is sometimes asserted that the Eskimo dog does not bark. This is a mistake, as he certainly has a snappy bark of his own, however little it may resemble the recognised barks of all other sorts of dogs. For the most part he howls.

The dogs, one and all, are up to every sort of trick. Moreover, their stomachs are for ever empty and always keen for any sort of food. They are fed at night whilst on the trail, in order that the meal should have time to digest and strengthen them. Incidentally, they sleep soundly buried in the snow, and neither attempt to stray nor to break into the hunter's sleeping place. In the morning they are nowhere to be seen. The white expanse remains unbroken. They are all under the snow, and in no way inclined to rouse up and be harnessed. Nobody wastes time looking for them. Someone takes a lamp outside the shelter and empties the oil on the ground. Immediately black noses emerge from here and there, tempted by the smell, and the rest is easy.

Once upon a time Nannook (the bear) the Bad Hat of the team, had a brilliant idea. He had often considered the weighty problem of the driving lash it seemed so impossible for his master ever to forget. The point was, how to get rid of it. So long as that whip cracked forever about them there was no chance of making the other dogs do his share of the work, no opportunity to slack off or snatch a rest. The only

scheme seemed to be to eat it. Nothing loth, Nannook waited for the usual midday halt. The hunter chopped off some frozen pieces of meat, sat down in the lee of the sled and ate and smoked. The whip lay unheeded on the snow behind his shoulder.

Nannook sneaked up, caught hold of the end of the lash, and steadily began to chew. He chewed yard after yard, his stomach feeling better with every foot of the way. He chewed up to the very stock, undetected; and having packed away at least eighteen feet of seasoned whalehide, crept back to the team. Presently the hunter bestirred himself for a start. Picking up his whip—he just gazed round. It was a dog, without a doubt; but which one? Who on earth could tell! All were innocently dozing, every one in his place, the picture of virtuous decorum. No one could tell. No one, therefore, could be punished. The rest of the journey was accomplished perforce of shouting only. For once in a way the dogs had the best of the joke.

It sometimes happens on a long trail with a heavy sled that a blizzard, or some other untoward circumstance, may delay a traveller for a longer or shorter time; sometimes for days. His food supply gives out and the dogs come to an end of their rations. The team gets ever more weary and more weak. The hunter goes on ahead, breaking the trail for them on snowshoes; the dogs stagger along after him, often lying down and refusing to get up. But the trouble has not been unforeseen. The master has prepared

for this sort of emergency by carefully bringing along some particularly bad bits of refuse seal meat. The stench of them would imbue a skunk with self-respect, in comparison. Taking one of these, he forges ahead, calling the dogs and leaving behind him a lure like poison gas. He drops the meat, and the Leader, picking up the scent, with a new cock in his dispirited ears, bustles round, spurring up the team with the information. "Come on!" he says. "Can't you see he's dropped that bit? My, can't you smell it? Hurry up, and let's get it!" They do get up, poor dupes; but the Leader, in virtue of his longer trace gets there first, and doesn't wait to argue. Over and over again this manœuvre is repeated, both on the hunter's part and on the Leader's. The rest of the team make all the effort they can to get equal with such duplicity, and sometimes even succeed in snatching first at the bait. Anyway, it is a fine way of getting the sled along and taking their minds off their troubles. A trail of loathsome scraps, each one encouraging a spurt on the part of the dogs, helps over the distance. Often an exhausted team has been enabled to cover the last few miles by this method, when otherwise they must have dropped.

In spite of the rigour of his life and the necessary hardness of his owner, the Eskimo dog is not without that glorious power of faithful canine devotion which is one of the most beautiful forms of love on earth. The writer knows of at least two instances where a dog has wasted away and died of grief in his master's

absence or after his death. But such a true canine trait is very rare. For the most part, these animals readily transfer their affections to the hand that feeds them.

They are savage to all strangers. The team guards its master's tent or *igloo* because he is the one who provides for it. The dogs sleep in the porch as a rule; and before entering a dwelling the visitor is well advised to call to one of the inmates to quiet them, otherwise he will be severely bitten. In winter, when hungry, the dogs are more dangerous than ever. It happened, once, that two Eskimo had died, and been sewn up in their blankets and buried beneath a cairn of huge stones in a neighbouring valley. One of the bodies was even enclosed in a light barrel. During the night the dogs raided the place, tore down the stones, and ate the dead. In the summer time they forage for themselves on the seashore, picking up small fish left by the tide, and anything edible they can find.

The Eskimo dog has a great deal that is wolfish and dangerous in him. The strain, indeed, is very little differentiated from the wolf. Sometimes a dog will leave camp, go back to the wild, and join a pack of wolves as one of themselves. Those who do this seldom return; but when they do, puppies of the direct resulting strain are greatly valued. It has been remarked that, whereas wolves in the Arctic seldom attack a human being, dogs will not uncommonly do so. The extraordinary thing about this is that hydro-

phobia is practically unknown. It would be difficult to say exactly what may be the natural span of life of the Eskimo dogs, but they seem to be at least as long lived as the larger breeds of European dogs.

The Eskimo names his dog 'The Lively One,' the 'Bear,' the 'North Star,' and in similar fashion. The animals possess much humour of their own; one belonging to the writer, of whom he was extremely fond, certainly enjoyed fun, and could very nearly speak!

Lest, while on the subject of these creatures too much space should be devoted to them, this chapter cannot be concluded without a brief description of the sleds to which their toilsome lives are vowed.

The small, light-going sled used for hunting is only about six feet in length. The cross bars are fastened to the runners by sealskin thongs, to ensure a certain degree of pliability in travelling over rough ice. A pair of reindeer horns with part of the skull attached are fastened by thongs to the back of the sled, forming a sort of erect triangle. This serves as a rack upon which to hang coils of sealing line and various implements, and also as a rest to lean against for anyone sitting on the sled. The runners are shod with strips of bone sawn from the ribs or jaw of the whale, and fastened on either by wooden pegs or by thongs sunk into grooves to prevent them wearing through. These runners are the object of very special care and constant daily attention on the part of the owner. They are covered with a thick coating of seal's blood,

for the sake of a fine surface. The craftsman takes a mouthful of this material and squirts it upon the runners, moulding it at the same time with his fingers. It freezes even as he smooths it down, and with a final squirting of water takes a high, hard glaze which ensures smooth and swift running for the sled. If seal's blood happens to be scarce the maker uses a mixture of moss roots and water, which gives an almost equally good surface when applied in the same way, and looks like nothing so much as a first-class cork lino.

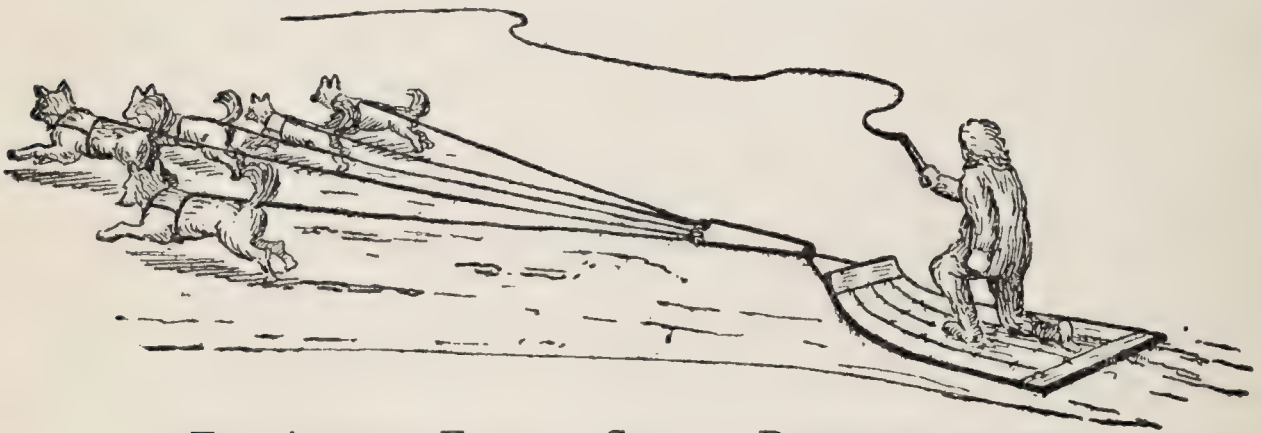
The *Kummotik*, or long travelling sled, is double the length of the foregoing and heavier in proportion. Otherwise its construction is the same. It requires a team of from twelve to eighteen dogs, whereas five are sufficient for the hunting sled. The loading of a *Kummotik* is a work of art. There is a place for everything, and everything has to go, just so, into its place. The spears and weapons are stowed in the bottom of the sled in front, by the driver. At the far end, a piece of skin is laid down and upon this slab upon slab of blubber for the lamp is piled up, and the lamp set atop of the lot, bottom up, because of the grease and dirt. Then the meat for the journey is put aboard—frozen deer hams, and frozen seals entire, enough for the whole party until they fetch up at the next tribe's camping ground. The meat is, of course, uncooked, since a minimum of raw meat gives a maximum of heat and strength. (Hence the Eskimo prefer their rations raw when there is work to be

done. The cooked stew of an evening is a mere luxury meal.) A skin is thrown over the heap of provisions to prevent the travellers' clothing being soiled by it. Over it all are piled the rolled-up sleeping blankets and the *karsâte* or deerskin rugs for mattresses. Knives, axes and lines hang upon the horns behind. The driver's seat in front is a box containing small tools, flint and steel. The whole load is securely lashed down to the cross bars of the sled. The man's spear is slipped into the lashings on one side, so as to be handy for use at a moment's notice. The women and children perch on top of the load, or make their way alongside on foot, as they prefer. The dogs' lines are all gathered to a point (like the sticks of a fan) just in front of the runners, when they are tied and then divided into the two short traces which, fastened to right and left on the runners, draw the sled.

A still more ancient form of sled was in use among the Eskimo before the advent of the whites, but the elders of the villages remember it well and describe it to-day. In those times wood was very scarce, tools very rude, and whales more abundant than at present. So strips of whalebone taken from the mouth (before this valuable material came into the markets of the world at all) were stitched together by whale or hide thongs, until a sled could be fashioned out of them, something like a huge, long, black shovel, very hard, durable and strong. Dogs harnessed to this contrivance made good speed with it, even with the driver squatting upon it. In one respect it was more service-

able than the modern form with runners, since unlike these it did not sink in snow or easily break through a rotten crust. It should be noted that a full-grown whale has about a ton of this black whalebone fringe hanging from his jaw, the longest part of it attaining six or seven feet when the mouth is open; so that a fair sized sled could easily be made out of such a great supply.

The struggle for existence in the Arctic has taught



THE ANCIENT FORM OF SLED AS DESCRIBED BY THE
OLDEST HUNTERS.

In the past when whales were plentiful and the whalebone of no value to the Eskimo, strips of whalebone were stitched together with whalebone thongs, and a flat sled formed. It was very strong and less liable to sink in the snow.

the Eskimo to utilise in the most ingenious ways resources at their disposal so limited that the marvel is so self-sufficing, so healthy, hearty and happy a civilisation, of its kind, could ever have been evolved.

Where these tribes have come so much in contact with other peoples, and even with well-meaning white enterprise on their behalf, that they have attempted to substitute for their old ways a method and mode of living indigenous neither to the climate nor to their own physique, they have invariably degenerated. The Eskimo of Labrador and Alaska have largely aban-

doned the snow house for the log shack or sod hut, and have in consequence been decimated by tuberculosis. Everywhere, contact with "civilisation" has tended so to divorce these children of the North from their natural environment as to initiate their wholesale decline. It is only now, in "the last North of all"—in Baffin Land, Boothia Island, Victoria Land, and the rest—that the Eskimo retain their old ways and their old vigour. Their life and their type everywhere else has become mongrel and nondescript. While there can never, of course, be any question in believing and thinking man's mind about the inestimable boon of Christianity and educating these people along the lines suggested by a sympathetic study of them on the spot, it seems to be very inadvisable to interfere with them, to "civilise" them too much after the unsuitable European model, to revolutionise the natural and suitable scheme of life they have so bravely and so ingeniously worked out for themselves during the uncivilised centuries of their existence in the bleakest and most inhospitable regions of the earth.

CHAPTER X

TRIBAL LIFE

IN their family and tribal life the Eskimo carry out a very smooth running sort of communism, the chief tenets of which are rigidly enforced peaceableness, open hospitality to the stranger, and a sharing of food and the necessities of precarious existence among each other. Tribal government is wholly patriarchal in character. The *Angakooet*, or chief conjurors—a class of men apart—hold the first place in public esteem and common council. After them the village is ruled by the successful hunters, who foregather with the former and with the aged and experienced, when it is a question of deciding where to go and what to do about the hunting, or change of encampment, or treatment of a delinquent.

The Eskimo have no idea of authority, except that which one man may exercise over another in virtue of his superior wisdom, experience, skill or strength. There has recently been some question of inaugurating a reindeer and musk ox industry on the vast moss pastures of the hinterland of Baffin Land, and the purport of much evidence given on this subject before a Royal Commission abundantly confirms the experi-

ence of the present writer, and emphasises the remarks that have been made as to the inadvisability of rushing matters with regard to "civilising" the Eskimo, and radically changing his mode of life from that to which the conditions of his environment have hitherto formed him. Savage as these conditions are, the Eskimo has wrought out his own well-being, and in his native state is as happy and contented an individual as could be desired. He has his hard seasons of semi-starvation, when the hunting is poor; but even these are borne with cheerfulness and equanimity.

"They seem to have the communal idea very strongly implanted," said D. Jeness, Esq., one of the witnesses. "Theirs is a community in which one man is equal to any other man. The idea of one man being a servant to another would not seem to be native to the Eskimo; it is a foreign idea. It would seem that they must learn the whole idea of one man serving another before they could be counted upon as reliable employees.

"An Eskimo will serve you faithfully on certain conditions, and will expect his payment afterwards. He will serve you for a limited time and perform almost any work, and will then expect his payment. The moment that payment is made he is an absolutely free man; but for the period of work, if he understands his contract clearly, he will serve you faithfully. They seem to work partly through the binding force of a promise; but a great factor in keeping

them at work seems to be that of having them understand that they will be well rewarded at the end. As is the case with all human beings, they vary; but on the whole they may be considered as faithful as white people found in civilised communities. Experience seems to show that they will keep to an agreement unless they get angry. In this event, they seem to forget their promise. If they, in a casual manner, more or less promise to do a thing, they are as likely as not to fail. Like most primitive people, if they trust you they will do what they can to justify your confidence in them.

“At the present time the Eskimo is not responsible. He would make an excellent servant, and in time an excellent trapper, guide and hunter. This is speaking of the Coronation Gulf Eskimo, who have known white men only during the past four or five years. It would seem that the Eskimo of Hudson Bay and of the east generally have other characteristics which have been moulded through this influence. It is not thought that this contact with white men is necessarily an advantage, if one is trying to convert the Eskimo into a reliable, responsible servant or working man. A great deal naturally depends upon the kind of white men with whom the natives have had to associate.”

It must be remembered that life in an Eskimo tribe is almost a family one. Each family is interdependent upon the others, and all have close ties and relationships. Thus anything which interferes with the

general harmony is dangerous and, in the unwritten law, a crime.

Matte, a good hunter and a man of standing in the tribe of X——, in the locality of Z——, had for long disturbed the peace of the rest. He had quarrelled, had spread ill reports about the doings of the hunters, had divulged their secrets, and been generally independent and unsociable. For a long time Matte was a thorn in the side of his tribe. He disregarded their customs and traditions, and became, according to Eskimo law, altogether a first-class misdemeanant. At last he became unbearable. His big voice and burly frame were no longer tolerable in the settlement. A day came when, in his absence, the Angakooet and chief men met in council to decide what should be done. His case was reviewed and discussed at length, and arguments were brought forward both for and against the accused. At length the verdict was given by the Angakut, the Chief of the Conjurors, and ratified by the Council. Matte was to be put to death.

Five men were chosen by the Angakut, and instructed in their duties. Two were to hold the prisoner's arms, two his legs, and the fifth was to strike and kill.

As the time for the man's return approached the executioners went out and waited for him in the path outside the village. No sooner had he appeared than they seized upon him. Matte read his doom in their eyes. He had but time for one ejaculation of despair

when the knife struck through his breast and justice was done. The body was thrown aside and left for the dogs and wolves to rend and devour.

The five men returned to their homes. One of them (the one who afterwards related the story to the writer), married Matte's widow at her express wish, and "lived happy ever after." The woman indeed was quite agreeable to the removal of her first husband, as it was miserable to be the wife of so unpopular a member of the community.

Continued quarrelling, like that of this man Matte, is punishable by death. So also is murder. A thief is banished from the village, but petty pilferers are merely sent to Coventry.

Old people are held in great respect among the Eskimo, and their counsel is always considered. They help as far as they are able in the household work, the old men repairing weapons, harness, etc., and the old women in sewing or tending the lamps. In times of scarcity, as in winter, meat and oil are always shared round. Directly a deer or seal is brought in it is cut up and pieces sent to each needy family. In times of plenty each family is supposed to provide for itself; but old people, widows and orphans have always the first claim upon those who have the means.

★ Among these people, mutual kindness is a general obligation. A widow or orphan child is never left alone, but taken into the house and family circle of the nearest relative. The widow gives her services

in return for food and lodging and clothing, and the child is cared for exactly as the man's own offspring.

Children have always the right of entry to any house and to partake there of whatever food may be going. Women are seldom refused a like privilege. In times of famine children are fed first, the women next and the men last. The writer has known a hunter to go out four days in succession and meet with no success. He had shared a portion of seal with another man who had caught one and cut it up as usual, but this had been given to his wife and family, whilst he himself, taking no more than a drink of warm water, went off with unimpaired cheerfulness to try his luck again.

Strangers and travellers, too, are always entertained and provided for so far as the means of the moment may permit. A native arriving from another tribe and having no relations in the village just puts up at any *igloo* he may chose—as a rule he will select the family best able to entertain him—and there his dogs are fed, his equipment is repaired or the necessary material offered, and food and a sleeping place provided for himself. Should he be on the trail alone, a temporary wife is furnished him from the widows or spinsters of the community, and it becomes her business to see that his clothes are dried and mended, and that when he departs again he has sufficient food to carry him over the next stage of his journey.

The Eskimo are aware that in some respects European customs differ from their own, and when

entertaining a white man his peculiarities are rigidly respected. The Eskimo standard of morals is not that of the European. It may be that in this matter of the temporary wife, as in the annual exchange of wives during the Sedna festivities, nature is making her own instinctive provision for the continuation of a race; otherwise so heavily handicapped are they by arctic conditions of life generally that without it wedlock would scarcely suffice for the purpose. The Eskimo despite customs which look like promiscuity according to the standards of civilisation, are not afflicted with the diseases associated with European vice—until they come in contact with unscrupulous whites. Either the germs of these scourges have not made their appearance in the Eskimo communities, or the people are particularly resistive to them. That this latter supposition is not borne out is evidenced by the havoc that has been wrought among the tribes in the past. The Eskimo, when left to themselves, are a moral people according to their own ideas, and the rude health they keep despite these strange customs, seems to vindicate them from an unthinking criticism.

If he can, the wayfarer makes suitable offerings in return, but they are not necessarily expected. He drops in on the family overnight, just perhaps when the hunter has returned with a good fat seal, and the jolly distribution of it all round is going on. There is a broad smile on the face of the housewife as she picks out the best bits for her friends and leaves the scraggy remnants for those of whom she cannot pro-

fess to be so fond. The children rush hither and thither, willing servitors of those who cannot come themselves.

The blood is carefully scooped into an ice bowl for future stew or for the glazing of sled runners. At the hospitable shout, "*Kileritse! Kileritse!*"—"Come ye! Come ye!"—everyone, friend and stranger alike, crowds into the house and squats on the bench or the floor, or in the porch, and is duly served out with his share. Nothing is heard for awhile but the crunch of strong ivory teeth; the red blood stains hands and faces; black eyes glisten with enjoyment. Then, after a time, the hum and clatter of talk rises to the smoky roof. Everything is devoured, even the entrails (squeezed through the fingers to flatten and empty them). Reindeer moss, taken from the stomach of a deer may be served up as well by way of that greatest possible luxury—a salad!

Finally, everyone goes to bed. The doorway is blocked up, blankets are unrolled, and men and women and children, stripped to the skin, wrap themselves up in these and lie down with their heads towards the lamps and their feet towards the back of the snow house, and sleep the sleep of health and good humour and repletion until the break of another arctic winter "day."

The children of an Eskimo community have quite a good time. Whenever infanticide has been practised among these people, it was never through cruelty or wanton waste of infant life, but simply because of a

dearth of provisions. As a matter of fact, the Eskimo prides himself on having as large a family as possible. He is entitled to have as many wives as he can support. It is not uncommon for a well-found man to have three wives—possibly sisters—all living amicably together. The children are named after some place or object, and many names descend from father to son. Thus we have "*Moneapik*," the little egg; "*Oonapik*," the little hunting spear; "*Pitsoolak*," the sea pigeon; "*Shokak*," roof of the mouth; and other names too crude for translation.

The pastimes of the children are just like those of children all the world over. On fine days they romp with the puppies, as described elsewhere, or they borrow a sealskin from their mothers and, finding a snow incline, drag it to the top and toboggan down on it in fine style and with resounding glee. They build snow houses; play with little improvised sledges; kick a seal bladder about by way of a ball; discover cat's cradles for themselves with any odd bits of thong; and get up to all the usual mischief with bows and arrows. The girls make dolls. The boys have an ivory top corresponding to cup and ball, and another game called "spearing the seal," which is played by two, with a piece of skin for the ice, and a bit of bone that moves about underneath it for the seal. There is a blow hole, of course, and a miniature spear.

The education of the Eskimo boy all turns on hunting. All sorts of curious observances wait on his first adventures in that line. When he secures his



THE TWO WIVES OF A HUNTER.

Polygamy is allowed, but generally speaking most have only one.

AN ESKIMO FAMILY OUTSIDE THEIR HOUSE.

The women in full winter dress of deerskins.

first weasel, for instance, he gives it to the dogs, simply to be torn in pieces; and that night has to sit up by the *igloo* door, one hand on hip and in the other a lamp stick. Possibly the root idea is to defend himself from the spirit of the little beast. When he gets his first bird, Young Hopeful sits in the middle of the sleeping bench, his mother on one side and his grandmother on the other. The boy is told to take off his jacket, and the two women wrench the bird apart between them in a sort of tug of war, to the accompaniment of cries of congratulation. The mangled spoil is then eaten to bring good luck to the boy.

The following tale of the voluntary suicide of the old people who feel that they have outgrown their usefulness to the community, and have rather become a burden to it, shows how strongly the communal feeling dominates the Eskimo, how essential to existence each one of them finds the social life of the tribe and village to be.

For many weeks summer has reigned in the arctics. Snow has disappeared. The ice has broken up and drifted away to the south; only a few bergs remain, like the remnants of a majestic fleet, wending their wandering way after the rest. For weeks on end it has been one long, glorious day, when the sun has scarcely set an hour. The weather is hot and the sky is blue. Arctic flowers and arctic heather gem the short turf; streams and cascades fill the valleys with the unwonted music of running water. The dogs lie about, basking in the sunshine, or betake themselves

to the seashore to hunt for fish and such toothsome morsels as may be left in the rock pools by the falling tide. The village of sealskin tents is pitched in a sheltered spot near some handy stream, overlooking the inlet. Contentment, ease and plenty are the order of the day. The kyakers skim the waters of the bay, hunting as usual, and in the evening the boys have a turn in the same light craft, to practice with harpoon or birdspear. They vie with each other in skill and speed, and take lessons from their elders.

The old men and women potter about, visiting each other. The crones occupy themselves teaching the younger women how things were best done in their day, and the granfers fight their own battles over again and exploit their own adventures, as they listen to the talk of the younger men—the tales of more recent feats accomplished, perils survived, and clever captures achieved. As the bright day wanes to that short twilight which is the arctic summer night, the men fetch their blankets from the tents, roll themselves up in them under the shelter of some boulder, and sleep in the open air.

The month of the eider ducks has come and gone. The women have manned their boats and made their annual raid on the island where the birds breed, returning with hundreds of eggs, plenty of ducks, and a goodly store of eiderdown from the nests. The days have been one long, joyous picnic, all the hardships, privations and dangers of the winter forgotten. The babies, brown and mother-naked, have sprawled about

in the sun and waxed fat and jolly, with the freedom and the play and the plenty of summer.

But now the time has come to get ready for a very big annual enterprise indeed—the great deer hunt, upon which the fortunes of the tribe will turn for months. If the Eskimo lay up little store of food, they accumulate all the hides they can for winter clothing. For several weeks before the start is made, stores of meat are prepared, slices of seal cut and spread on the rocks, or hung on lines in the sun to dry. Piles of moss and cotton plant are collected and dried for the winter's supply of lamp wick. Sealskins are cleaned and stretched and dried for clothing, boot soles, boat coverings, and water buckets; intestines are inflated and dried for sail cloth and material for making windows. The dogs are outfitted with seal-skin panniers for transport purposes. The trek ahead of the tribe is a long and laborious one. They will journey for many days by water up the rivers, and climb long ranges of hills and cross many valleys, before they reach the interior and the pastures of the deer. Each man, woman and child must shoulder his own pack, for none can carry a double load. And so, it often chances, comes the tragedy of old and enfeebled age.

Seorapik was an octogenarian. Her hair was grey and her back was bent. She had managed, somehow, the previous year to carry her belongings on the long, long trail, and to stumble along after the tribe. But at last the bitter fact forced itself upon her that she

could follow the hunters no more. She must stay behind—alone. She could no longer carry her load nor keep pace with the folk on the way, and none might carry her. She had no alternative but to remain in the deserted village and await the tribe's return.

Now Seorapik, like every other Eskimo, was an intensely sociable being. She loved nothing so much as to hear laughter and jokes about her, and to be in the thick of all the village talk and doings. As she faced the prospect of the long lonely weeks ahead, in the lifeless silence of the empty camp, with the days growing ever shorter and colder, without a soul—except perhaps a child—to bear her company, her heart quailed and grew very heavy. There was the danger, too, of attack by wolf or bear, and of sickness coming on—and death. Death, all alone! True, they would leave her a plentiful store of food—the good village folk—and lots of skins; but what comfort could these afford her in their absence?

But the law of the North is stern and immutable.

They knew it—those sons and daughters of hers, and all their sons and daughters. They grieved for Seorapik, and remembered her many acts of kindness to each and every one of them, and her life of cheery toil spent wholly in their service. They had a custom to be sure—but it was hard to endure it when it came face to face. A familiar custom, designed to meet such a case as this; but a heartbreaking one, all the same. Seorapik remembered it, too, and was the first to summon the courage to announce it.

She proposed to bid the tribe goodbye rather than let it take leave of her. Her time to go on the long, lone journey from which none ever returned could not be far off in any case. She decided to anticipate it. She could not face seeing her folk load up the packs, start out on the trail, without her, and disappear over the hills. She could not contemplate the intense loneliness that it would all mean, and miss the laughter of the children, and even the rough and tumble among the dogs. So the dread subject was broached to her son.

He gave his assent. Itteapik announced the decision to the villagers, and they came to help with the preparations for Seorapik's death.

A rough, round *igloo* was built, and the old woman withdrew into it, taking her few belongings, escorted by all her kindred and friends. They encouraged her to the last with every kindly and sympathetic thing they could think of to say. She braved it out, and, with her cheery but quavering goodbye still in their ears, her loved ones blocked up the entrance to the little death chamber in such a way that no dog or wolf might break in.

And there she sat down slowly and willingly to starve to death, quite happy so long as her children continued to come from time to time and call to her from outside, and tell her all that was going on, every single little thing that happened. . . She never asked for food or drink; they never gave it. . . She never wanted to come out; they never moved a

stone. . . She simply had to go. Their part was to make her last days, her last hours, as happy as they could, simply by being there—quite close—outside.

Then the time came when the feeble voice just ceased to make one more response. She had gone on her own long journey first, to the land where parting would be no more, nor the fear and sadness of it. Her last hours had been happy ones, cheered by the sounds of the village life, the cries and gurgles of the babies, the shouts and cat-calls of the boys and girls, the murmur of men and women talking over their accustomed tasks. She had no loneliness to bear, after all, no desolation, no silence. The old Eskimo died with a smile of love and contentment on her face, with a long record behind her of woman's good and motherly work, of a humble, "primitive" life indeed, but lived according to what light she had—and so into the better life beyond.

There was Nandla (the spear), too, the blind hunter, who also went to death under the lash of arctic circumstance.

The incident took place near Davis' Strait, and was related to the writer by one who had witnessed it. Again, the inexorable law of the wild left one handicapped as Nandla was no choice. The man was comparatively young, but by reason of his blindness useless to himself and a burden upon others. In a hungry land, where every extra mouth to be filled represents a problem, there is no room for one who cannot provide for himself. The severity of the code

of the North is very great. It cannot be judged by the ordinary standards of humanity.

Spring was at hand—the joyous spring of the arctics. The days were lengthening and the seals increasing in numbers. They were coming up from the south for the breeding season. In the village all was life and bustle. The hunters were full of preparations, and the dogs scarcely less so. The boys were loading the sleds and harnessing the teams. One by one, each hunting outfit glided off over the frozen ground, out towards the bay.

Outside his snow house sat Nandla, the blind hunter, listening to every sound and seeing every detail in his mind's eye. His heart was heavy as lead. In his younger days he, too, had gone forth just like these others, to spear the season's catch, and come home rejoicing with a heavy sled. But repeated attacks of snow blindness (despite his wooden snow goggles) had destroyed his sight; and here he was, in early middle age, a useless, hopeless, helpless man, tied to the house, dependent upon his folk for food and clothing, and a drag upon them all.

Each night, as the hunters came home, the whole tribe gathered as usual round the cooking pots, when the excitements and doings of the day would be discussed with no less gusto than the food. Nandla always had his place in the family circle, and eagerly drank in every word the hunters had to say. He longed to hunt again, himself; to bring back the kill, to see the children come pushing into his house for

their share, and to bid his wife give generously to the aged and the destitute! In his mind he pictured it all: the village nestling in the bay, huge, snow-clad cliffs rearing up at the back of it, and overhead the pure blue of the bright sky, where the glaucous gulls wheeled and cried. He pictured the scavenger ravens perched about everywhere, on the look-out for bits; the vast expanse of the frozen bay, glaring white in the cold sunlight; and beyond, a heavy black mist smoking up in the wind, marking the water line. Out there were the hunters—mere dots—moving about in the still immensity.

And here was he—Nandla—idle and useless, unable to occupy himself even with such tasks as fell to the ancients of the tribe—the repairing of lines, harness, and weapons. He could not patch up a snow house any more, or trim a lamp! Often, during the months of severe weather and of scarcity his relations had been hard pushed to find the wherewithal to feed him or clothe him. Nandla was very wretched.

At length, one evening, after just such a bad spell of weather and of luck, Nandla begged to be taken out on to the hunting grounds. Now, his relatives had been thinking things over rather grimly, and had seen nothing ahead for him but long years of misery and possibly of want. The problem suggested but one solution. It was simple enough. This request of the blind man's to be equipped once more for the hunt and taken along with the rest, gave them their opportunity. They fell in with his desire and made their

plan. They knew of a certain rout where danger lay. Nandla should be taken that way.

It was neither treachery nor murder they planned, but an end for the afflicted man of his anxieties and griefs. Nandla set out that morning full of delight. His heart was full of unwonted excitement. He yelled to the dogs and bumped and glided over the ice on the sled with a long missed sense of exhilaration.

They soon reached the grounds. Nandla's guide seized his hand and led him towards a gaping seal hole.

"Follow me!" he said, dropping the other's hand and lightly stepping to one side.

"I follow!" replied the sightless man, and straightway fell into the hole.

He went right under, then and there—under the ice—and was immediately drowned and frozen. A handy piece of ice served to seal the death trap, and all was over. Nandla had died on the hunt, and had entered the Eskimo heaven like the other valiant men of his tribe, and taken his place with the doughtiest of them, where there would be joy and plenty for evermore.

CHAPTER XI

TRIBAL LIFE—CONTINUED

CHILDHOOD in the arctics does not last long. There are among the Eskimo a number of strange customs and superstitions attending not only the transition time between girlhood and maturity, but the whole physical life of woman, which may have their interest for the ethnologist (especially from the point of view of the interpretation of the mentality of primitive peoples), but in which the general reader would scarcely find much interest. Suffice it to say that the root reason—probably instinctive—underlying many of these observances and rites, these taboos and indications, is very possibly a hygienic one, since in nearly every instance some purpose of the sort seems to be unconsciously served. It may be that herein lies one of the true distinctions between uncivilised and civilised existence. In the latter, most of the functional aspects of life are subordinated to the intellectual and the spiritual, while in the former they bulk self-consciously and far more obtrusively even than among the lower animals.

The Eskimo community in sanitation or in sex matters has few reticences. This may be another way

of saying it has no pruderies. The native attaches no more importance to the functions of sex than to those of eating, drinking or sleeping. It would, of course, be easier to attribute complete insouciance in these respects to the native mind if, instead of trapping some of them out with rather elaborate ceremonial, it kept them all much on a level. In most instances of insistence, however, a hygienic motive, conscious or unconscious, lies behind them. Although the people live under very crude conditions, crowded together in the *igloo*, without privacy or special quarters for women, they are not without a sense of the fitness of things or some idea of personal modesty. It is the height of ill-breeding to stare, for instance, at anyone whilst dressing or undressing.

Like the Indians, and like most other uncivilised people, the Eskimo marry early, sometimes indeed at the age of twelve years. Unions are arranged by the mothers and grandmothers. A woman with a marriageable daughter is fully alive to the advantage of seeing a good hunter attach himself to the domestic circle. She looks round in good time, and noting some promising youth, makes overtures to his mother on the score of the cleverness, the docility and the industry of her girl. The whole thing at once becomes a fertile topic of discussion. Some amicable understanding having been reached, presents are interchanged and the young couple are informed that they are to be married. There is no ceremony. The girl is sent to her mother-in-law's house, and for a

month or more works there under a pair of sufficiently vigilant eyes. This gives the boy also an opportunity of making up his mind about her. And the prospective bride has a chance to do the same about him. As a rule, the whole thing works out quite satisfactorily, and even happily; but if the girl turns out lazy or careless or bad-tempered, a divorce is declared and she returns to her parents' *igloo*, to be married elsewhere, with better luck next time.

This sending of the bride to the hunter's mother's house scarcely amounts to an interval of probation. The girl certainly expects to stay. In all probability the young folk have known each other from childhood up, and there is no reason to suppose their marriage will be anything but a success. It is the Eskimo way of asserting the world-wide fact that you never know a person until you have to live with him—or her.

Should, however, real faults of temper or character be presently discovered on either side, it is quite open to the bride or bridegroom to ask to have a divorce declared. The matter is arranged between the families concerned, not necessarily by the Angakok. Should a girl be returned on her people's hands enceinte, after an experiment of this sort (not a likely contingency at an early age), the child forms no obstacle to her contracting another union later on. It is adopted into the mother's family and cared for as usual, without a trace of stigma attaching to either. In the Arctics, where families are small, children are an asset, and represent little burden to a community

every member of which is willing to help feed and support them. If a child is a boy, he will grow up to be a hunter, and catch seals for the tribesfolk; if a girl, she will become the wife of a hunter and the mother of more hunters.

The difference between married life and free or promiscuous unions, even with this primitive folk, is quite clearly marked. A married woman, i.e., a woman belonging definitely and recognisedly to such and such a man, is faithful to him and he to her, so long as harmony reigns between them and no "divorce" takes place.. The occasional interchange of wives, such as during the Sedna ceremony, is a recognised institution of Eskimo life, and interrupts the even tenor of the connubial way in no permanent sense. There is a good deal of "immorality" (according to standards entirely inapplicable to this people in the native state), and promiscuous intercourse with widows and discarded wives. It is from this class that strangers staying in camp are accommodated with their temporary partners.

Fidelity is observed between married people while they agree to remain married. Sometimes, however, two husbands will come to an agreement with each other, with the knowledge and consent of their respective wives, to effect a temporary exchange. Again, fidelity is now observed as long as the exchange endures, but reverts to the original partner when presently dissolved. Should any children come of this interlude, they generally remain with the mother, the

permanent husband being quite willing to adopt them.

The new-made bridegroom does not leave his parents' home and set up his own establishment until he is able to maintain it by hunting. If the husband and wife belong to different tribes, the woman is adopted into that of the man. The men sometimes maltreat their wives, if aggravated by shrewish tempers or bad household management, but children very seldom experience any but the kindest and most indulgent treatment. The writer knew a boy who stabbed his mother in the arm during a fit of temper, but was merely scolded for it. That he knew no better was the excuse alleged in his defence, and it was his elder's business to teach him self-control and good behaviour. Children are devotedly loved by the Eskimo, and maternity (never prolific in the arctics) is held in the highest esteem. If the men occasionally beat the women it has never been known that children are ever abused or neglected. All travellers and observers agree in this respect.

A girl will be attended in childbirth with her first baby, but not after that. The expectant Eskimo mother has to be alone (except on the first occasion), in a little house set apart for her, and without assistance. After it is born, the baby is never washed but rubbed down with a soft fur or bird skin and put straight away, stark naked, into the capacious hood of its mother's tunic. The woman must, however, never eat alone during this time, lest a *Tougak* with three fingers

steal her food and bring evil upon the child. She must pay no visits until she has quite recovered in the space of a full month, and only then if she has a new suit of clothes.

As an illustration of what has been said about some real reason underlying such injunctions as the foregoing, it may be remarked that, why the mother may not eat alone is probably to ensure that she does not starve. She is in solitary confinement, and cannot procure and prepare food for herself. To ensure her being fed she must have the food brought to her and the messenger stays to share the meal. Again, an expectant mother must always run out of her *igloo* or *tupik* during the day when the dogs howl. They do not howl incessantly, as might be imagined, since they are away with the hunters in the day, and asleep, buried in the snow, at night. The woman has to sit up on her haunches when she hears the dogs in the night-time, and not lie down again until they cease. After all, there is good sense in this. The women sit about in their houses for the most part, and get comparatively little exercise. The two rules involved in this dog howling enactment ensure the expectant mother a modicum of exercise and fresh air, which she might not otherwise exert herself to obtain.

Childbirth is always attended by the women conjurors, never by the men. The event in itself is thought little of, and not looked forward to with any dread. The writer has known of a case of husband and wife being on the trail together with their sled,

in midwinter, when the woman was taken in labour. The man merely stopped the team and hastily put up a snow shelter. The wife retired to it for a little while, then placed the new-born child in her hood, clambered back upon the sled, and continued the journey. A long day's journey later, they reached the village for which they were making, and in a very short while the mother was walking about in it, as well and strong as ever.

The would-be mother who has reason to fear her hopes of a child are groundless, has recourse to the conjuror, the Angakok. Here again, the interrogations, the incantations, the conjuration to which this worthy commits himself (the while his spirit is supposed to ascend to the moon to procure "material for a child"), the conjuror claims and is allowed the right of cohabitation and so follow the accompaniment of a natural sequence of events, which probably result in the woman realising her desire. In many instances the superstitions with which Eskimo laws and injunctions are wrapped up, serve to enforce them. Otherwise they would either not be followed at all, or would have no weight in public estimation. It is only possible to make head or tail of primitive ritual by the aid of some tentative interpretation of the sort, which must be deduced from long familiarity with the people amid their own surroundings.

All was quiet in the village. The sealers had gone off early in the morning, taking the boys with them,



PREPARING FOR A LONG WINTER JOURNEY.

Two families are going to a far tribe and will be many days on the journey. The sleds, from 20ft. to 30ft. long, are being packed with all the family belongings and sacks of chopped up seal meat for the dogs.



and the women had settled down to their own tasks for the day. The old folks were for the most part asleep on the sleeping benches in the dwellings. It was a cloudy day, visibility very low, sun-dogs in the misty heavens foretold bad weather to come.

Suddenly a tumult of sound broke upon the village, and the few old dogs left there on guard gave vigorous tongue in turn, as somewhere from out the murk came a chorus of yowls and yelps mingled with the shouts of men and the sharp crack of whips.

An immediate exodus took place. Everyone sprang up and ran off to meet the newcomers. The children scrambled up the cliff at the back of the little settlement, sheltering it, and the elders tottered along to the head of the pathway cut through the sijak or shore ice, to catch a glimpse of the strangers and their sleds. Presently two large travelling outfits with full team of dogs, and crowded with Eskimo, swept into view. Cries of "*Chimo! Chimo!*" (Welcome) resounded from every side, and there were hearty handshakings as the strangers tumbled out and declared their gladness to have arrived.

It seemed they had come from Fox Channel, many "sleeps" away, and had travelled over hills and across frozen bays and through deep snow, for days and days, in order to visit this tribe. In a twinkling the dogs were unharnessed and fed, the sleds unloaded, and the guests carried off into the hospitable *igloo* under the cliff.

Then matters began to clear, and the object of the journey declared itself. A head man and his wife, it seemed, had come this long distance on behalf of their son, a lad of about fifteen, a promising young hunter of marriageable age, who desired to find a wife. No girl in his own tribe had taken his fancy, but the family had heard of a likely bride in the Middle Coast tribe, and had come to see her and her people. She had the reputation of being clever at all household duties, docile and pleasing in manner, with eyes like sloes and hair as glossy black as the raven's wing. Moreover, they had heard that she had no relatives and dependents except a widowed mother. The whole idea had pleased them so much—mother, father and son—that here they were, to look into the thing for themselves, to give and receive news, and to do a bit of incidental trading. They settled down in camp for a few days, and both hosts and visitors thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Negotiations proceeded apace, without hitch or difficulty, and at last were brought to a pleasant conclusion. The prize secured, a day was fixed for the departure of the bride and bridegroom and his people. Her treasures and possessions were packed on the sleds, and with many tears she said goodbye to the good folk of her own village.

All seemed to augur well for the wedding journey. The sky was clear and the sun shone. The ice was perfect and the snow well packed and good for sled travelling. The dogs, rested and well fed, flew over

the ground in high spirits. The sleeping houses built en route by the wooer's party, proved to have remained intact; the frozen meat and blubber, buried beneath the floor in each of them, had not been disturbed.

The first night was spent in singing. The young man gave a vocal account of the exploits of his tribe and of his own prowess in hunting, to an audience consisting of his admiring parents and the bride. All went merrily, too, the second day out; but after that, disaster overtook the party.

They came to a stretch of newly formed ice, over which they must pass or make a long *détour*. They decided to risk the shorter way. The ice was very thin, so they got off the sleds and attempted the crossing on foot, each one at a stated distance from the other. Treading as lightly as possible, they started the venture, but, half-way across, a scream rang out, the ice broke, and the two women were engulfed in the icy current beneath. Lines were flung to them and a rescue effected, although they remained in imminent danger of being frozen. Prompt measures had to be taken. There was no shelter at hand, and no immediate means of making a fire. There was only the powdery snow! In this the half-drowned women were rolled and rubbed. The snow acted almost like blotting paper, and they were soon comparatively dry, although still perishingly cold. A shelter was quickly built for them and a lamp hastily lit. Their blankets were unrolled and they were snugly

wrapped up in their capacious folds and put to sleep, to recover from the shock.

The very next day, late in the afternoon, as they drew near their next sleeping place and were looking forward to a feast on the rations stored there, another disaster befel this ill-fated arctic wedding party. They actually sighted the wayside house and were driving right up to it, when a deep growl came from inside and, before they had time to descend or prepare for attack, a full sized polar bear rushed out and hurled himself upon them.

The women fled and the men scattered, whilst the animal took possession of the sleds. All the spears and guns were lashed in place, so the refugees were unarmed and powerless. The bear, muttering and growling, tore the bales of provisions apart and feasted on the meat and blubber. While he was so engaged, one of the hunters, bolder than the rest, stalked his way up to one of the sleds and managed to secure a spear. Then he opened an attack on the highwayman, after the approved manner of bear-fighting.

Crouching with poised weapon low on his haunches, he suddenly sprang up and began to sing and dance about, on this side and on that, but drawing nearer all the time to his astonished adversary. The bear became more and more bemused by the noise and the agility of the oncomer, until at last the latter was able to rush close in and strike him one fatal blow with the practised spear. Although the creature had rifled

the travellers' house and devoured their cache, it was now their turn to skin and eat him; and so accounts were squared.

After this, the luck of the bride and bridegroom seemed to turn again, and the rest of the journey was accomplished in comfort and safety. The young woman settled down happily with the Fox Channel tribe into which she had married, and became a model wife under the vigilant eye of her husband's mother.

Having sketched something of the education the native children receive, and of the adult life and occupations of the tribe generally, the next thing to deal with is death, and the elaborate ritual of an Eskimo funeral.

These people fear death, and the dying. Just before a man dies he is dragged outside the house or tent, so that his spirit may not haunt it. No dwelling where a death has taken place is ever re-occupied. Should anyone chance to die inside, all the possessions are held to be polluted and must be cast away.

A corpse is sewn up in the deceased's accustomed sleeping blanket, placed upon a hand sled, and hauled away to the chosen place of burial, followed by the members of the family and the relatives. It is laid upon the bare rock (the ground being frozen hard as iron, grave-digging is out of the question), and huge stones are piled around and upon it, like a cairn. In the case of a man, his weapons, drinking cup and knife, or these things in miniature, are placed beside

him, his sled or a small model of it nearby, and he is buried with a little sort of doll representing a woman. In the case of a female, her needles, knife, cup, and a man doll, are laid beside her. Food is deposited on a flat rock near the pile, and the mourners sit down to eat a farewell meal with the spirit of the dead. Then they march in single file seven times round the cairn, following the direction of the sun, i.e., from east to west, chanting directions to the departed: —

Innoserra arkiksimalarook: My life, pray let it be
put right.

Illooprakoole kissearne: Through that which is
pleasant alone.

Nakrook mallilugo: Through space following.

Kaumâttevoot malliglo: Following that which
gives light.

The idea is that the spirit must follow the course of the sun, to guide it to the realms of bliss and light whence comes that glory, and whither it goes.

The objects placed with the corpse under the stones are to assist and accompany the spirit on this journey.

The word *illooprakoole* is a “spirit word,” used only in addressing spirits. It means a route through pleasant ways not beset by dangers. The same significance, in an ordinary mortal connection, is expressed by a different word altogether. *Nakrook* is another “spirit word,” meaning the Great-Air-Space-beyond-the-Earth. The ordinary word in everyday usage is

Sillarlo. This spirit language used by the conjurors has its parallel in every case in ordinary parlance. The following are a few instances :—

Ordinary Word in everyday use.	Meaning.	Spirit word used in conjurations.
<i>Netsuk</i>	A seal	<i>Angmeatseak</i>
<i>Angakok</i>	A conjuror	<i>Takreoo</i>
<i>Agakka</i>	The hand	<i>Issarkrateeka</i>
<i>Sennayo</i>	One who works	<i>Issarrayo</i>
<i>Aput</i>	Snow	<i>Nungooark</i>
<i>Kyak</i>	Canoe	<i>Agfarkjuk</i>
<i>Angoot</i>	A man	<i>Peyaktoiyo</i>
		etc., etc.

In the case of the burial of an unpopular or badly conducted man, the people walk round the cairn in the reverse direction, i.e., from west to east, with a different refrain. The idea being to direct the spirit away from the light and into outer darkness, their refrain begins with the words to the effect :—

“ Evil will always have evil.”

All this is called the custom of the *Kingarngtooktok*.

The mourners at length return to their village, and apparently forget all about the funeral, unless in the case of the deceased being of ill repute. Should the conjuror assert that his spirit has gone to the realms of Sedna (the Eskimo hell), gifts and offerings have to be collected in order that the necessary conjurations may effect his translation to some other abode (the Eskimo purgatory).

The people much dislike to have their dead bodies devoured by dogs, lest their souls have to wander over the ice and land on vain hunting trips; but they do not object to wolves on the same score, since the wolves also devour the souls, and the departed, thus disposed of, will always hunt deer successfully and live on the meat. Neither do they object to the carrion-loving raven, as the soul in this case is also absorbed by the bird and provided for in perpetuity. It would indeed take a trained psychologist to determine wherein comes the distinction as between dogs and the other scavengers!

On the anniversary of a death, the spirit of the deceased, good or bad, is supposed to return to the grave of its body, and is there met by its friends still in the flesh, who bring it offerings of food.

On the return from a funeral the mourners march round the dead man's dwelling from east to west, then entering, take a draught of water, for luck in sealing. The chief mourners neither leave the house nor work on any skins for three days in succession. Afterwards they throw away their clothes and abandon the dwelling. After a death the community should not wash or do their hair nor cut their nails for three days. Those who transgress this injunction are called *Nuggatyaunyoot*, the disobedient. Nor are men allowed to have their stockings taken out of their boots and dried, for the *Tarnuk* (spirit) will kill them in that case.

Unfathomable to the white man's intelligence as

many of these odd observances may be, the root idea will explain the general scope of them. The spirit of the deceased is earth-bound for three days, and if of an evil disposition when alive, is liable to do much mischief to his late family and friends. Earth-bound spirits are the *Toopelât* (pl.), the evil spirits of the dead. Hence the custom of haling the dying well outside the house. During the three following days, a knife edge, placed outwards, is set at the entrance of the *igloo* to prevent the spirit from returning, especially at night, and doing some injury—causing some pain, sickness or death—to the sleepers within.

When an Eskimo community hears of a death in its midst, the husband on his return from sealing waits for the first quiet moment in his house, and then offers his wife the third finger of the right hand, to crook, and they say together, "*Tokkoneangelagoot*" (we shall not die). This is the custom of "*Killaryo*." The children then come to the mother, and in turn she takes the third finger of each one's left hand between her teeth and singes a little piece of the hair on the left temple of the child. The child is bidden to bite the mother's jacket on the shoulder, and say "*Sittatoot*," the mother answering with another formula of preservation. The writer has made every effort to get at the meaning of these doings, but they seem to have lost their original significance by now, and even the oldest natives fail to interpret them any more. They were probably some form of supplica-

tion against the entry into the body of the Spirit of Death.

From much of the foregoing it will be seen that the Eskimo have a decided belief in the soul, the *innua*—the spiritual, immortal essence of man. Also that they have formed for themselves definite ideas about the after life, either in bliss, as a reward for good living, or in misery, as a punishment for evil—Good and Evil, of course, being tingured by the cast and scope of the Eskimo mind and its standards of social life. There is little of ethical content in it all. The heaven and hell of Eskimo conception are gross and material. Heaven is a land of warmth and sunshine, with good hunting, absence of storms and hard seasons, and plenty of fat seals in its ice-free sea. Hell is the dark and bitter abode of the submarine Sedna, the enemy of man, who engineers bad weather and times of scarcity. Descriptive legends of her awful “house” abound among the tribes, showing a fancifulness and imagination fantastic as nightmare.

To deal with the subject of the Eskimo religion, however, requires a chapter to itself. Its chief priests are the Conjurors, and its chief festival the Sedna ceremony.

CHAPTER XII

THE ESKIMO LANGUAGE

THE Eskimo tongue requires a chapter to itself, for although it can boast of no literature—being until recently an unwritten language—it should have exceptional interest for the student of comparative philology. It is the speech of a primitive, untutored folk, yet its vocabulary is very large, its grammar complete, methodical and perfect, and its construction capable of expressing subtleties and combinations by inflection, unlike those of any tongue, springing from the well-known stocks of human speech. It is euphonic, agglutinative, and complex.

Europeans find Eskimo difficult to acquire. The writer, like others, had largely to construct his own grammar when studying it. He spent many long hours, first with the young folk to get the purity of the sounds, then with the middle-aged men to arrive at correct idiom and fluency, then with the ancients to get at the folk lore of the tribe. Oftentimes their speech was merely a series of long and complicated gutturals, two hours of it being enough to make a man's head spin for the rest of the day. But labour and pertinacity were at length rewarded; the

language was mastered, and the minds of the arctic people revealed.

The romance of this grammar consists in the fact that it has all been marshalled and classified, and reduced to a system which will bear comparison with even the classic tongues. Unless the first missionaries to the arctic had taken up this virgin and inchoate subject and handled it by the aid of the centuries of culture to which they were heir, Eskimo speech must have still remained a sealed book to the philologist, and—what is of far more importance—presented a Hill of Difficulty for years to all those who should come after them in the same ministry. With the aid of the grammars and dictionaries so patiently and thoughtfully compiled in the dark, unknown and bitter North, the would-be evangelist to-day may prepare himself for work among the Eskimo in the merest fraction of the time it took the first Danish envoys from civilisation.

The original attempt was made by the well-known Danish pastor, Hans Egede, who went to Greenland with his wife in 1721, and lived there among the natives for many years. Eskimo was the mother-tongue of their son, born in the country as one of its own people. In time, this lad was sent to Denmark to study at the University of Copenhagen. On his return to Greenland, young Egede applied himself to the scientific study of the language he knew so intimately, and to the compilation of a grammar and a dictionary. His example was followed by the teachers

who came after him, some of them being German linguists imbued with the meticulous love of learning and of intellectual conquest the task seemed pre-eminently to require. These tracked down and classified the many meanings of Eskimo inflection and expression, and perfected their system of interpretation. Hence, of course, the thoroughly Teutonic mould into which the syntax of the Eskimo tongue has been thrown.

All this work has formed the basis of study for everybody who has had occasion to learn the language since, although such an undertaking has always entailed a new and personal effort to work out the grammar and compile a local vocabulary. For all students of Eskimo, including the present writer, find a variety of dialects, although generally it may be said that the language varies so inconsiderably from one region to another, that hunters from widely different parts of the arctics can soon—by mutual questionings—understand each other. Those in Greenland speak practically the same tongue as those in Alaska.

Apropos of the purely etymological aspect of this little known language, it is interesting to recall an observation made by Dean Farrar in a lecture before the Royal Institution, delivered in 1869. "I hardly hesitate to prophesy," he said, "the extreme probability that the final answer to many high scientific problems regarding the nature and the origin of man may come from enquiries into the languages of

nations such as these (the Chinese, Eskimo and Cherokee) rather than from any other branch of palaeontological research."

Eskimo has indeed received some measure of study and analysis, and it is for grammarians to tell us whether or no this prophecy has been to any extent fulfilled. A French writer, M. Hovelague, hesitates to answer any question as to what group of human language the "hyperborean" tongues should be assigned. His observations should be recorded here perhaps, by way of a commentary on the exhaustiveness with which the Germans seem to have gone into the subject: "Au surplus le nom d'hyperboréennes ou arctiques, sous lequel on réunit ces différentes langues, ne doit pas donner le change sur le plus ou moins d'affinité soit entre elles, soit avec autres idiomes. Bien des hypothèses sont encore permises à ce sujet, mais il est vraisemblable qu'un certain nombre de ces idiomes résisteront à toutes les tentatives que l'on pourra faire en vue de les laisser parmi tel ou tel groupe suffisamment connu. Il serait dangereux, en tout cas, d'accorder aux relations des missionnaires sur telle ou telles de ces langues, notamment sur celles des Esquimaux, plus de crédit qu'il ne convient. On n'y trouve, le plus souvent, que des rapprochements de mots, des etymologies; en somme rien de scientifique. Ajutons, d'autre part, que certains idiomes hyperboréens ont été étudiés avec soin et par des auteurs compétents, ainsi qu'on peut le voir dans les publications de l'Académie de Peters-

bourg.” (La Linguistique. Bibliothèque des Sciences contemporains.)

Up to within recent times the Eskimo had no system of writing. But another patient evangelist, inspired by the necessity of delivering the message of Christianity in a more permanent form than by oral teaching only, invented what is known as the Syllabic Character for the benefit of the Indians, at a post called Norway House. This was the Rev. James Evans, a minister of the Canadian Methodist Church. The Syllabic Character, which is a *sound* (and not a letter, or alphabetical) writing, similiar to shorthand, was designed for the Cree, but proved to be easily adaptable to represent the Eskimo speech. Without such a method, it is difficult to imagine how restless and roving tribes, at this post to-day and gone to-morrow, could ever have been taught to read. By this means, however, an ordinarily intelligent individual can learn in eight or nine weeks.

The principle of Mr Evans’ characters is phonetic. There are no silent letters. Each character represents a syllable; hence no spelling is required. As soon as the series of signs—about sixty in number—are mastered, and a few additional secondary signs (some of which represent consonants and some aspirates, and some partially change the sound of the main character), the native scholar of eighty or of six years of age can begin to read, and in a few days attain surprising accuracy.

Such results as these, such gifts of pure intellectual

effort, are surely among the greatest blessings civilisation has to confer on the few primitive peoples still left in the world.

Of late years the British and Foreign Bible Society have taken charge of the work, and now the Gospel in Cree, Syllabic and Eskimo is widely spread.

The Syllabic Character is known far and wide to-day in the arctics. It has not been spread solely by white men, for the people teach each other as they travel from tribe to tribe. The Eskimo freely write letters to their friends and hand them over for delivery to anyone taking a journey in the desired direction. The letters always reach their destination, because the postman at his first sleeping place invariably reads them all through from first to last; so that if, as often happens, one or two should get lost, the addressee receives the missive by word of mouth; and incidentally the postman knows everybody's business and is altogether the most glorious gossip who could ever drop in and enliven the circle round the *igloo* lamp of a winter's night.

Pen, ink and paper, it may be noted, are innovations of the new civilisation. Prior to the advent of the white man the only idea and the only means of calligraphy the Eskimo had was the etching on ivory or bone. Many vigorous and spirited drawings exist of hunting or other scenes, scratched on blade or handle, and sharply bitten in, black and clear, by rubbing with soot from the lamps. It is not remarkable that a knowledge of writing and reading should have spread

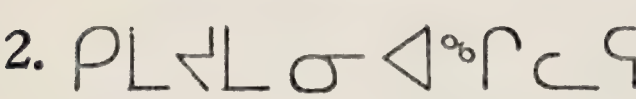
A NATIVE CHART.

A chart made from memory by Pitsoolak an Eskimo hunter, giving the Sea Coast, Inlets, and Islands of the south coast of Baffin Land. These men are trained from boyhood to remember the coast and routes of travel and know them well.

among the people in this way, for the Eskimo are avid of instruction, and eagerly avail themselves of any opportunity of being taught. Where Christianity itself has gained a footing it has been largely through the instrumentality of some among them who have come in contact with missionaries, and passed on to others all they had seen and heard.

One of the most puzzling aspects of Eskimo is its "agglutinative" character. The words all run together. All the parts of speech may be joined to the verbal root and then conjugated in its various moods and tenses, so that the word finally produced by this process may be sixty or more syllables long. Students find the principal difficulty, not so much in building up and saying these peculiar words, but in correctly understanding what the natives say.

The following lengthy remark will illustrate three things: first, a characteristic mood and tense of the verb "to flee"; secondly, the phonetic characters used; and, thirdly, the composite nature of the word.

1. Kemâyomaneangelara = I shall not wish to flee
2.  from him.
3. Ke-mâ-yo-ma-ne-â-ng-ge-lâ-ra.

The Eskimo tongue has a full complement of the parts of speech. There is no definite article, but the numeral adjective one, *attousik*, takes its place; e.g., *attousik angoot*, a man, i.e., one man.

There is no form to express gender. Sex is dis-

tinguished by the word “man” or “woman” (really male or female) added to another noun; as *kingmuk*, a dog; *arngnak*, a woman; *angoot*, a man. *Kingmuk arngnak*, a female dog; *kingmuk angoot*, a male dog.

In many cases where English admits of only one word for an animal, Eskimo has several. A deer is a deer in English all the year round; in Eskimo it has a different name for its growth or habits at certain seasons, as in the fawning period, etc.

The noun plays an important part in the sentence on account of the various affixes which may be attached. It is inflected for number, and for no less than nine cases (rendered by prepositions in translation); it draws possessive pronouns and some adjectives to itself as a magnet draws iron filings; it has moreover a transitive and an emphatic form. At the risk of writing a chapter which might be taken from an Eskimo Primer, we venture to give examples of some of these intricacies of the snow folks’ strange speech, since whatever else it may be, this can scarcely be called a hackneyed subject! So the transitive form of the noun is used when it is the subject of a transitive verb:—

Ernipta nagligevâtégoot = our son, (he) loves us.

The emphatic form:—

Angootib erninne nagligeva = the man loves his own son.

There are three numbers—singular, dual and plural:—*Noonak*, a land; *noonâk*, two lands; *noonât*, lands; and each of these is declined with different end-

ings to express eight cases translated by the nominative and vocative, and then "of," "to," "in," "through," "from," and "like" a land. We feel we are getting on to firm ground somewhere when it is possible to note down such a rule as this: "Nouns in the singular end either in a vowel or in the consonants *k* and *t*. The dual always ends in *k*, and the plural in *t*."

We must not part with the noun unceremoniously. Its possibilities are not easily exhausted. It must have cost a good deal of thinking, originally, to get it into grammatical harness. For nouns of different kinds have different terminations, which add all sorts of ideas to their isolated meaning. For instance, *kut*, a family; *innuk*, an Eskimo; *innukut*, the family of an Eskimo. *Vik*, time or place, and *kooveasook*, rejoicing; hence *kooveasookvik*, a place of rejoicing. Again, *katte*, a companion, and *nerre*, to eat; hence *nerrekattega*, my table companion, *ga* being the possessive pronoun.

The possessive pronouns, indicated by inflection, include "our two," "your two," and "their two." There is also a possessive emphatic form of the noun, his "own" son.

The Eskimo have names for the numerals up to six, after which figure they use a system of addition and multiplication to express number. Seven, for instance, is six and one; nineteen is ten and eight and one. The figure ten is arrived at as being the count of a man's fingers on two hands; twenty includes his toes. Eighty

is translated by “Men four, their extremities finished.” It must indeed have been a matter of some mild philological exhilaration to the first translators when they arrived at such a conclusion as this !

Then there are the verbs. This part of speech may be almost called the whole of the Eskimo tongue. It annexes both subject and object, and can express through various particles a sentence which would require in English half a dozen or even ten words. There are two kinds of verbs, transitive and intransitive; three Voices, active, passive, and middle; the usual Moods, of which one—the subjunctive—lends itself to an interesting inferential sort of meaning. When the person addressed can form some idea of what the speaker wants or means, without the use of the principal verb, this mood comes into play : “Because there are no partridges,” is the sentence; “*I didn't get any,*” is the inference. “Because I am very hungry” leaves it to be inferred “*therefore I want some food.*” When this is confined to the obvious, well and good; it would scarcely be so clear, “Because the house is very warm” therefore “*you must make it cooler,*” unless the conversation took place in a snow house where conviviality was having a disastrous effect on the roof and the walls.

The verb has participles and tenses, which have many modifications of meaning with no equivalent except an entire sentence in English. In narration, there is an extraordinarily graphic past, not adequately rendered by “When So-and-So lived;”

but “in So-and-So’s own time of being in the world.” There are impersonal verbs, and irregular verbs, and all sorts of particles; potential (I can do a thing), optative (I wish to do it), negative (I do not do it), the proper “sorting out” of which is half the battle of learning Eskimo. Time is expressed by time particles placed between the verb and the verbal termination; there are also verbal and adverbial particles which have fixed rules as to position, always preceding the time particle. Thus, a word may be elaborated, such as *Tikkenarsuakpok*, “He-endeavours-to-arrive,” or *Tikkenarsuatsinakpok*, “He-endeavours-always-to-arrive;” and “I-indeed-hear-you,” or “I-indeed-hear-only-you.”

It would be perhaps superfluous to offer further notes on the Eskimo tongue, since the foregoing will suffice to give some idea of its scope and complexity. The syntax falls under two headings, the formation of compound words and the arrangement of these into sentences. The position of words in a sentence, particularly a short one, may be changed without altering the sense. It is no part of the present writer’s purpose to do more, here, than to sketch the briefest outline of one whole section of his subject. To do justice to this language would require very considerable space. Again, there is no particular object in adding a chart of the syllabic characters, which are purely arbitrary, have no history beyond that already given, and belong in no sense to the genius of the Eskimo themselves. The only recommendation they

might have—if the general reader could pronounce them—is that they far more nearly give the sounds of what is really a flowing and not unmusical tongue than the barbaric conglomeration of outlandish consonants and double vowels which, as a poor expedient, represent to the eye only, Eskimo words in our inadequate letters. It is for this reason that we have so often given, in the foregoing pages, only the translation and not the Eskimo words themselves. In Roman characters they convey a hideous idea to the eye, and a still worse idea to the ear.

It is for the future to reveal whether or no the newly found gift of writing will lead these people on to extensive literature. The Moravians have published some well known books, such as “Christie’s Old Organ,” etc. If so, by the analogy of every literature in the world, it will begin with verse, by the enshrining of the folk tales immemorially dear to every nation, and by the composition of some sort of Eskimo saga. The Greenland Eskimos composed long songs in honour of Fridtjof Nansen before he took leave of them, after the first crossing of their icy continent. It may be that these Eskimo poems, printed in his book, together with Dr. Rink’s collection of “Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo,” and Dr. Boas’ similar collection of the fables of this people (“The Central Eskimo”) and the present writer’s contribution to the same subject, constitute so far the bulk of the offering made by these children of the arctic to the literature of mankind.

CHAPTER XIII

LEGENDS

THERE exists among the Baffin Islanders, as among all the other tribes, one long consecutive legend in particular, which should rank, if not with the great Scandinavian and Icelandic Sagas beloved of William Morris and of Wagner, at least with some of the most picturesque of Grimm's immortal fairy tales, and certainly with any of the strange and monstrous legends of Kalevala, the Finnish cycle of national song.

Students of national story-telling will probably find analogies and relationships between the Eskimo story of "Sedna" and the characteristic folk tales of the other arctic or sub-arctic peoples east and west. "Sedna" is beguiled into marriage by a gallant hunter who is really not a man at all, but a sea bird. This sort of tragedy, or disillusionment, is common in Eskimo fable. In one Alaskan-Eskimo tale, the heroine marries the human semblance of a bear.

The Sedna legend—a religious legend around which turns a large volume of Eskimo superstition—has its repulsive as well as its poetic aspects. But to one who has lived intimately with these people, it would

seem that so strange and awesome a story of the wild north as the tragedy and death of Sedna should be set, in song, to the metre of Kalevala and Hiawatha. It is the metre of a child-like version of adventures happening to a child-like folk.

Belief in this legend, in the existence and the power of Sedna, a maleficent sea-goddess of the underworld, forms a large part of the Eskimo religion, and the annual autumnal festival arising out of it is the principal celebration in their calendar. In connection with this phantasy, it is noteworthy that the Eskimo conception of the spirit of evil—or at least of hostility to man—is unlike that of any other nation. The Eskimo devil is a woman.

The Eskimos are great story-tellers, and the bulk of their fables, handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, has assumed a stereotyped form. Their narration demands the exercise of an art in which the arctic folk excel—the art of vivid narration. Many of these tales begin as recitatives; some are almost wholly related in verse or musical form; others are told in prose, with every sort of appropriate gesture, modulation of the voice, and facial expression. A number of them are onomatopoeic in character, imitating the calls and cries of the birds and creatures of the wild. Story-telling is one of the principal features of the social life of these people of the north, and bulks largely in the programme of all festivities.

Many of the Eskimo legends would require a cer-

tain amount of bowdlerising before they could be presented to the world as a book of Eskimo tales, a contribution to the folk lore of the nations; but some of them (notably the well dramatised story of the migration of the *Saglingmiut*, with its very essence of primitive arctic life) could be retold intact. Ethnologists have made a fairly representative collection of these stories in the course of the past fifty years, and most of them are to be found in the bibliography of arctic travel. Those incidental to these pages, with the exception, of course, of the Sedna tradition, are fresh contributions to the subject, not included, to the best of the writer's belief, in any other work.

An amusing tale, related to the writer, is that of the amorous youth who made a particularly disappointing mistake.

In a certain village there lived a lovely maiden with her father. She possessed little but a happy disposition and a ready smile. The old man himself was so poor that his one dream of the future turned on the hope of his daughter securing a first-class hunter for a husband, who would provide for the two of them ever after. No young man, attracted by the girl's bright eyes, was made welcome over the lamp in that *igloo* unless her father satisfied himself as to his credentials. But, as luck will have it apparently all the world over, the daughter's love was won by the most ineligible suitor of them all—a youth poor in everything but in courage and hope and promise. The old man rejected all his overtures and rudely denied

him his daughter. So the two were driven to form plans of their own.

They decided to run away together, and that she should merely feign resistance when her lover arrived to carry her off. The night came for the attempt. The old man and the girl retired to rest as usual, rolled up in their blankets on the sleeping bench, and the lamp burnt low. Now, the approach to their abode was across a neck of ice spanning a deep ravine. The youth came along, and cautiously crept over the narrow bridge. Quickly entering the *igloo*, and perceiving the two sleeping forms, he snatched up one of them, furs and all, and rushed back whence he had come. To evade all possibility of pursuit, he smashed down the ice bridge behind him. Then, burning to look upon the face of his bride, he drew the blankets from about her head—only to discover with the utmost consternation that he had carried off the father instead of the girl! Dropping his burden none too gently, he made off at top speed and fled into the night. The story-teller failed to draw upon his imagination as to what happened in the domestic circle thus disastrously broken up, after that.

To return, however, to the chief of the legends—the legend of Sedna :

There was, once upon a time, a beautiful Eskimo girl, called Sedna. She was her widowed father's only daughter, and they abode together by the sea shore. As she grew up she was wooed by many a

youth of her own tribe, and of others who came from afar. But to no single one of her lovers did her heart incline in the least. She refused altogether to marry. She had a proud spirit and delighted in disdain. At last, however, a day came when a very handsome young hunter appeared upon the scene, from a far-off strange country. Neither Sedna nor Anguta, her father, had ever heard of him before. He had beautiful skins cunningly wrought with a stripe in the coat, and a spear of ivory. His kyak drove inshore over the shining sea; but instead of landing on the beach, he poised it on the edge of the surf and called to the maiden in her tent above the strand to come off to him. He wooed her with an enticing song: "Come to me; come into the land of the birds, where there is never hunger, where my tent is made of the most beautiful skins. You shall rest on soft bearskins. . . . Your lamp shall always be filled with oil, your pot with meat."

Sedna, framed in the entrance of the leathern hangings, refused. She would not come down. Wholly won at first sight, maidenlike she must refuse! So he began to plead and woo. He drew for her a picture of the home where he would take her, the rich furs that he would give, and the necklaces of ivory. Even though she vowed she wanted no husband, let her come down with her bag, her sealskin sack of treasures, and fly with him! Sedna made the coy boast, "Am I not the only one who does not want a husband?" but even as she said it, her hand fell from

the tent flap and she stepped down towards the sea.
“Let my bag be brought . . .”

He placed her aboard his kyak and paddled off on his return journey. So Sedna went away with her lover and her father saw her no more on the cliff by the seashore that was her home.

Came swift awakening and a bride's tears! Sedna's lover was no man at all, but a phantom man whose real self was a Bird! One of those peerless creatures of the arctic sky who, with “wide wing . . . broad-spread to glide upon the free blue road” above the crashing floes, wheels over the bitter waters of the North. Some have it a Fulmar, and some a Loon. It was a Spirit bird, having power to transform itself into the semblance of a human thing. Falling in love with the maiden, it had taken the form of the hunter and decoyed her to its own.

Sedna was inconsolable. She had the horror of a very human girl at her strange mate, and could by no means make his land her home and his people hers. The legend has it that the Loon provided for her as an ordinary hunter would have done; but she was wild and homesick, and passed her days bewailing, as lone and desolate an exiled maiden as ever cried, “Woe, woe!”

(Sedna's disillusionment is a note in the story wholly coarse to European ideas. The Eskimos are a people without prudery. A perfectly natural incident on the journey revealed that the lover was a bird.)

But the father wearied for his daughter—the Eskimo

word has the loving possessive "his own daughter"—and at length fitted out his boat and sailed away to that distant coast whither she had been borne. The husband Bird was from home when he came to this land, and it was a sad and sorry tale that greeted his ears from the wind-lashed, spray-beaten maiden that had been his smiling, contented child. Without more ado, he lifted her into his boat, made one swift turn, and fell to retracing his course. The craft—a tiny mark—was soon lost to sight in the welter of the waves.

Then the Loon, returning, enquired and said, "But where is my wife?" The cry echoed round the naked cliffs. And answering cries, wind-borne on the darkening air, told him that his wife had fled. Her father had come and snatched her back, in grief and anger, to his bosom.

At once, the Bird, assuming the Phantom form again, followed in his kyak; but when the Father saw him coming he covered up his daughter with the furs and things he had loaded in the boat. Swiftly the kyaker bore down upon them, and rushing alongside demanded to see his wife.

"Let me see my wife!" he cried. "Let me only see her; pray let me see her!"

The angry father refused, and held determinedly on his way.

"Then let me see her hands only. I only ask to see her hands!" the Kokksaut cried, to be passionately rejected again.

Then, bowing his head over the opening of his kyak in grief and desolation, the kyaker fell behind. He had failed! His manhood had failed; Sedna had hated and left as true a lover as ever a man could have been to her, and he would no more of it! With one wild sweep of his wings, he was a bird again, the kyak a mote upon the waters beneath, and a stroke or two of his great vans brought him above the boat of the fugitives. He hung there awhile, uttering the strange cry of the Loon; but at last dropped away into the darkness.

Then there arose a storm—a black arctic storm—out at sea.

And Sedna's father was stricken with fear. Terror of the bird-man gripped his heart. Terror of the offended powers of sky and sea nerved him to a bitter sacrifice. The raging waves demanded Sedna, and he must give her up, and repulse her struggling, and see her drown. He bent forward, and with one fearful thrust, cast his daughter out of the boat—so to propitiate the offended sea!

The wild, white face rose to the surface, and despairing hands caught at the gunwale. But the Terror was not to be defrauded, and the father, frenzied with grief and the desperate determination of his deed, snatched up an axe—a heavy thing of ivory and wood—and brought it down upon those pathetic, clinging fingers. The maiden fell back into the sea (and the first joints of her maimed and bleeding hands turned into seals). But, coming up again,

with agony in her eyes she made another struggle to catch at the boat. Three times the drowning creature came back; but she was the doomed victim of the sea, and the father must consummate the sacrifice. Three times he smote and chopped at her mangled hands. (The second joints became the ojuk, the ground seals; the third joints made the walrus; and whales sprang of the rest.)

Apropos of this reeking legend, it must be borne in mind that the Eskimo believe implicitly in Spirits and in their power to demand sacrifice. The father, believing the storm to be an expression of the anger of the Sea god (on behalf apparently of the sea-bird) and a demand for the daughter he had reclaimed, did not hesitate to give her up and to steel himself against her drowning agony.

At last Sedna sank, to rise no more.

And the storm sank, too. The boat presently came to land. The father entered his tent and lay down beneath it and slept a sleep of exhaustion and over-spent grief. In the tent was fastened Sedna's dog. But that night there was a high tide which washed up the beach, demolished the tupik, and drowned the two living creatures within. So that man and dog rejoined the maiden in the depths of the sea. There they have dwelt ever since, in some "house" or cave of Eskimo imagination. There they preside over one whole region—called Adlivun—where souls are imprisoned for punishment for a while or all time, after death.

The sea creatures who owe their origin to Sedna belong to her and she controls them. She protects them, and causes the storms which bring wreckage and famine to the kyakers and sealers. Hence she is in Eskimo mythology inimical to mankind, the source of the worst evils they know, a spirit who has to be propitiated or quelled by ceremony, as the case may be.

She is considered to be of enormous stature, with two plaits of hair, each thick as an arm, and she has only one eye. The other was pierced and put out in her drowning struggle.

The writer has seen an example of this sort of sacrifice in actual life, and it redeems the story of Sedna's father from the senseless selfishness of which it seems to be compounded by some narrators. Two boats containing a party of hunters were returning from sealing, when a squall struck them. Before sail could be taken in, one boat overturned and the men were thrown into the water. They all climbed back except one, who was numbed with cold and dazed with shock. He did not sink immediately, being held up by his deerskins. He even drifted close by the boat, and easily within reach. One man, indeed, did reach out and touch him with an oar, but when he failed to grasp it the general decision was to let him drown. He was "material for the Tongak" spirits, claimed by the Spirit of the sea—as was Sedna in the legend. He simply drowned in the sight of the others, and of the women on shore, who covered their faces

with their hoods and gave the death wails, i.e., began to shriek and howl in the frenzied manner proper to the circumstances.

It is possible that no better story than that of Sedna (with all its elements of phantasy, human emotion, poetry and savagery) could be found in illustration of a good deal Dr. Marrett has to tell us in his "Psychology and Folk Lore," by way of reducing primitive folk-lore and primitive procedure (religious or medical, or both, arising out of it) to a science of primitive psychology. His masterly analysis of the outlook of the wholly untutored mind on the phenomena of cause and effect demonstrates quite clearly the sincerity and the obviousness of the "savage" rites and customs which seem to us so barbaric, irrelevant and monstrous.

The Sedna myth gives rise to the taboo, and the practices of the Sedna ceremony. The aboriginal theory of things (the origin of the sea creatures, the cause of storms, etc.), leads to aboriginal methods of dealing with them "On (close) acquaintance, such as perhaps is to be obtained only on the field," says Dr. Marrett, "the savage turns out to be anything but a fool, more especially in anything that relates at all directly to the daily struggle for existence . . . common sense is no monopoly of civilisation," although the educated application of it to the material and spiritual needs of life may easily be so. The interest of the primitive theurgist is a practical one, and the elements in his problem are only two, namely,

a supernormal power to be moved and a traditional rite that promises to move it. The special function of the conjuror or the medicine man among aboriginal peoples is to grapple with the abnormal, and "this ever tends to constitute for the savage a distinct dispensation, a world of its own." There is in such a story as the Sedna legend some groundwork of common sense and verifiable experience; and in the practices which arise out of it, this has to be taken into account, together with some very real occult content (whether of suggestion or hypnotism, the most modern of sciences alone could say), and some conscious fraud no doubt on the part of the conjurors.

Prior, however, to an account of this ceremony, it will be as well perhaps to devote some space to the conjurors themselves. For, among the Eskimo, as among other primitive peoples, the typical "medicine man" is a specialist, trained for his vocation and initiated into an exclusive guild. He is by no means necessarily a fraud and a charlatan. Normally, the primitive faith healer has as much faith in himself and his methods as his patients have, and between the two of them—when it is a question of a mental reaction to be obtained—there is no reason why absolute success should not crown his efforts. In the sphere of material results these amazing methods seem to be wholly empirical, and yet it cannot be denied that the Eskimo conjurors sometimes produce effects comparable only to some of the well-known demonstrations of the "magic" of the East.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONJURORS

THE greatly esteemed profession of Conjuror is open among the Eskimo to both men and women. Anyone is eligible to become a student in the rites and lore of the caste, but only those who pass its tests (i.e., only those who attain, not only a really high degree of the power of mental concentration, of intuition and character reading; but some true occult gift), are allowed to practise. The art has its own hierarchy of professors according to their degree of aptitude and initiation. Only those with some particular qualification, natural or acquired, such as the power of throwing themselves into true trance, attain the highest degree of dignity. Aspirants to the position of conjuror who fall short of this, but have yet studied and schooled themselves to some purpose in the art, are not denied its practice altogether, but hold lesser rank and officiate on minor occasions.

The would-be conjuror is put through a fairly long and fairly severe course of training, the whole of which, wrapped up in an immense amount of magical circumlocution and sheer imposture, simply tends to enhance his intellectual qualities, such as they may be,

at the expense of the grosser appetites of the Eskimo lay individual.

The candidates to the caste—youth or young woman—begins by choosing a conjuror—male or female—under whom to study. And immediately the neophyte enters upon his apprenticeship. The length of time this may last rests upon his capacity to learn the rites and acquire the psychological stock-in-trade of a conjuror. It is to the teacher's advantage to spin out this period of tuition as long as possible, since for the whole term of his training the disciple is the body servant of the master, and performs for him even the most menial offices. The novice is a sort of articulated pupil into the bargain. He pays for his initiation.

First of all, he has to acknowledge all his breaches of the communal law and custom, and confess to the conjuror whatever of wrongdoing there may have been in his life. The Eskimo believe in this sort of confession, and it is frequently enjoined. He receives forgiveness, and thereupon embarks upon a wholly new course of life.

Fasting and abstinence and the mastery of the appetites of eating and drinking are the first trials, and the first victories he has to win. The Eskimo are vast eaters, and so much of their diet being flesh meat and in the raw state, their physique tends to grossness. This grossness has to be remedied if the conjuror is to be capable of dominating other minds by the greater force and clarity of his own. The neophyte eschews all luxuries whilst learning, again,

of course, with the idea of self-command and of that detachment from the unnecessary things of life which—under civilised conditions also—hang so many trammels round a finer aspiration. In the terms of Eskimo experience, this involves allowing the hair to grow long and hang down; to eat with the hands covered; and to go to rest without discarding the clothes. The strict diet, the austerities, the real course of mental training, improve the candidate's natural powers of mind, enhance his memory, and concentrate his will and consolidate so solid a belief in the system and powers he is attaining that the graduate has really, at last, something professional and exclusive to offer the community.

To begin with, the aspirant has to become absolutely familiar with all the ancient customs of the people, and their significance. Then he has to study the spirit language, the tongue of the conjurors—that is to say, the language in which spirits are to be addressed and in which they express themselves through the initiate. He proceeds to study the cause of sickness (this however in a superstitious and not a natural sense), and what penalties to inflict for the wrongdoing which sickness is supposed to indicate. He has to learn all the various incantations for various occasions, and exactly how to set about them.

All this is merely the first stage of his apprenticeship. He begins to show of what stuff he is made, so far as the career of conjuror is concerned, when it comes to dealing with matters of guilt and secrecy.

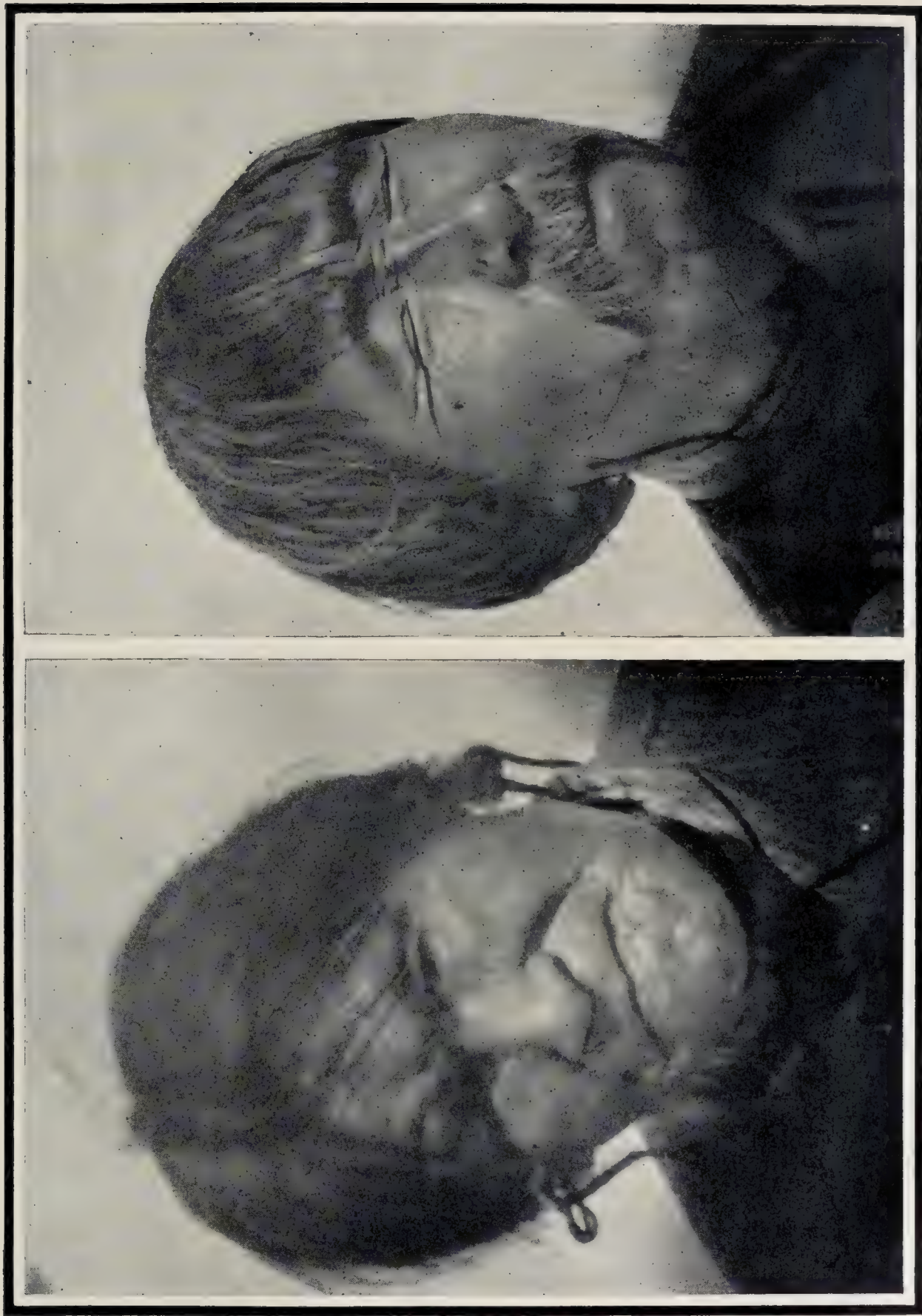
The accomplished conjuror must be able to detect and affix guilt. Here he is concerned entirely with the minds of his fellow men, and trying to fathom and read them. The Eskimo mind is as tortuous as the Eastern. The conjuror pursues his own method, which may have a good deal to recommend it in the eyes of those who have made a study of the occult, but which is not the method of direct evidence and deduction. He throws himself into a perfectly genuine trance, and stakes everything on the intuitions of that state and the awesome effect of it upon the interested beholders.

To do this the conjuror sits down with his face to the wall, and drawing his hood well over his features, rocks himself backwards and forwards, calling the while on his familiar spirit (his *Tongak*) to come to him. He continues this howling and rocking until such concentration of mind is effected that he becomes unconscious; he foams at the mouth. Whilst in this condition of self-induced hypnotism—or however the spiritists may explain it—his spirit, it is believed, goes below to Sedna, or above to the regions of beatitude, to find out what has been the cause of the guilt in question, and discover the requisite punishment.

The interesting thing about this performance is that it is by no means the tissue of imposture one might suppose. The Eskimo conjuror may be no more and no less a fraud than the medium of a spiritistic séance. The writer has been creditably assured by these practitioners that the trance ensues

in the vision of a great white light (like the light thrown on a sheet by the magic lantern), and then in that illumination they see the whole scene of the supposed crime re-enacted, all the people implicated in it, and its every detail. They are told, or inspired, what penalty to inflict. On returning to consciousness, the vision is not forgotten, but sharply remembered. The conjuror is able to accuse the offender, to question him, and extort a confession from him. The penalty generally takes the form of some obnoxious task to be performed or some fine to be paid in kind.

This power to see the white light and to project in it the thoughts, probably, of the assistants at the conjuration—for the performance, when genuine, amounts to nothing less—is really a remarkable psychic feat. Probably the conjurors understand it as little as the laity; they have only trained themselves to achieve it, and they explain it according to the fantastic body of superstition which constitutes the Eskimo religion. It is only after long practice and the sustained effort after great mental concentration that the manifestation is attained, that the light can be seen, and incidents recorded in it. This is the final test for the honours of full conjurorship. The candidates sit night after night with the teacher, faces to the wall, and the lamps burning low, shutting out all extraneous objects and distractions, in the endeavour to see the light, to pass into trance. Those who remain for ever unable to arrive at this, fail to pass the test, and are rejected from the class of the



ASSEAK AND HIS WIFE.

Asseak was a skilful hunter, but lost his sight through snow blindness. His wife was a noted conjuror in her day.

full-fledged. They must content themselves with minor dignities in the order of conjurors. One of these inferior grades is that of the *Kunneyo*, the one who incants for the seal hunters. Another is the *Makkosâktok*, the one who goes round with the whip during the Sedna ceremonies; and a third is the *Noonagecksaktok*, another official at the great annual celebration.

On the completion of his training and on his passing the final test for the witch-doctorate, the candidate is publicly acknowledged as a Conjuror. He makes a visitation of all the dwellings in the settlement, performs incantations in each, and receives in payment a number of charms, such as small pieces of carved ivory or bits of deerskin fringes. These things are valueless in themselves, but signify that the tribesfolk have accepted the new conjuror.

It is easy to see how the conjurors acquire the power they undoubtedly have over the people, and easy to imagine how much of fraud, imposition, hypocrisy and sheer self-seeking could be practised under the thick cloak of their rites, incantations, superstitions, and—last, but not least—their clever trickery and legerdemain. What may be perhaps not quite so easy is to convey to the reader an idea of the real good faith and of some demonstrable if inexplicable occult command underlying much of the conjuror's art. The whole subject is too big, either from the point of view of primitive superstitions and procedure, or from that of occultism, to be dealt with at

much length here and now; but by way of illustrating the point that the Eskimo conjuror can perform miracles (collective hypnotism?) as striking as the well-known Eastern trick of the mango-tree, one of the incidents of the Sedna ceremony may be instanced.

At a certain stage of the Sedna proceedings, the conjuror, who has the spirit of a walrus or bear for *Tongak* (familiar spirit), spears himself through the jacket, or is speared by others, deep in the breast. When this whole performance is not merely a spectacular trick, it seems to be quite genuinely done. A line is attached to the deeply imbedded, barbed spear-head, and the people catch hold of this and pull on it and haul the impaled man about, to prove that he is fairly caught, as the victim of a hunt might be. The conjuror is bathed in blood. At length, however, he is let go, and he makes his wounded way alone to the seashore. Here the *Tongak* releases him from the spear, and after a short space of time he returns to the festival whole and well as ever, with no sign about him except his torn clothing to indicate the rough handling he has undergone.

The whole stock-in-trade indeed of the Eskimo conjuror is a certain very demonstrable, acquired, occult power. Besides this, he has a good memory, an immense amount of shrewdness and cunning, an intimate knowledge of animals and their habits, of weather conditions and seasons, and, above all, of course, a capacity to judge of his fellow men.

It is after the period of training is over that the

conjuror becomes the bestial, sensual creature, full of cupidity and trickery, he is so often represented to be. After graduating in the guild, no further prohibitions and denials are observed. He marries, indeed; but no woman of the community is safe from him. Under one professional pretext or another, he may have his way with each and every one of them, with or without her own particular man's consent. This, however, is seldom withheld. On the whole, monogamy is the rule among the Eskimo, although there are plenty of exceptions. The writer has known a conjuror with three wives, two of whom were sisters.

When a wife is childless it is a great grief both to her and her husband. The conjuror is called in for professional advice and to find out why she is not favoured by the spirits. He resorts to his incantations, but takes an obvious advantage of the situation (quite as much for his own ends as for the satisfaction of the would-be parents), and all is satisfactorily arranged. Again, when a man is very ill and has been performed over by the conjuror, one of the things demanded by the latter is that the patient's coat shall be brought to his house in the evening by the man's wife, and not taken home again until next day.

Eskimo life is full of this sort of thing, and the crudities of relationships entering into any of their typical folk-stories make these a little hard to reproduce in a manner acceptable to better taste. But there is certainly some distinction to be drawn between

the primitive doings of a people struggling numerically against the cruellest conditions of life nature can impose, (who moreover have no conception of the ethical idea of morality), and mere promiscuity and vice as practised for their own sakes by the "civilised" peoples of far more favoured lands.

One of the commonest occasions of calling in the aid of the conjuror is during bad weather. The days have been dark and stormy, with bitter gales and snowstorms, so that the hunters have been unable to go afield. The witch doctor arms himself with a whip—either an ordinary dog whip or one made from seaweed—and a knife, and rushes out to join the howling elements. He slashes the wind and shouts down the gale. "*Taba! Taba! Namuktok!*" (Stop! Stop! It is enough!).

And presently the wind drops, and the accustomed death-like stillness of the frozen world supervenes upon the uproar.

The conjuror of course could read the signs of the weather even more astutely than the practised hunters, and awaited the moment when the gale had spent itself for the exhibition of his influence.

After the death of anyone looked upon as more or less of a criminal, the conjuror is called upon to drive the evil-intentioned spirit of the departed away from his old home. He does this by shading his eyes carefully in the effort to perceive the spirit. Then, with a knife or spear he rushes about, yelling and shouting, and stabbing as if at his invisible foe, calling upon

it to depart and go to its own place below. At length he vanquishes the spirit, and announces that it is to be dreaded no more; by their belief in him he removes their fears and restores tranquility of mind and body; whereupon he receives his dues and the perturbed and anxious relatives recover their poise and cheerfulness.

In order to grasp how seriously the Eskimo believe their lives, and every adventure of their lives, to be beset by unseen influences, it must be remarked that the main idea of their uncouth religion is that, not only man, but all things, animate or inanimate, have souls. Rocks, wood, earth, water, sun, moon, stars, fire, fog, icebergs, plants, all animals, all creeping things, and even hunting implements, have spirits which never die. The *Tarnuk*, or soul of a man, has the shape of a man, but is about one inch in height, and is to be discovered in the hand of a conjuror or in that of a new-born babe. The soul of a bear is like a bear; that of a walrus like a walrus; but the soul of a deer resembles a spider, and that of a salmon, a man! The souls of rocks are like sturdy, thickset men; the soul of the earth looks like a piece of liver. Animals' souls are black and hairless, but those of some inanimate objects are clothed in deerskin. It would indeed take a great deal of study to determine how and why the people should have arrived at these fantastic notions and distinctions. Perhaps it would never be given to the mind of the modern white man to fathom the workings of such primitive intelligence, building up for itself a monstrous, night-

mare scheme of things, on foundations of the blackest ignorance.

For sheer phantasy, the writer is aware of course that the beliefs of the Eskimos are paralleled by those of many other uncivilised peoples. It may be that along lines of comparative savage mythology some generalisations might emerge which would throw light upon the whole subject. Here, however, would lie the study of a lifetime.

Briefly put, the Eskimo religion consists in the belief in a multiplicity of spirits, good and bad, and in one Supreme Spirit, of whom no fear is felt because he has no evil intention towards man. The conjuration and propitiation of the evil spirits is the constant business of the conjuring class, although everyone has some degree of power to deal with them. Man was made, indeed, by the Great Supreme Spirit, and his name was given, *Âkkolukju*; and woman, *Omaneetok*, was fashioned from his left-hand floating rib.

The Eskimo very highly esteem their own race, but hold Europeans in considerable contempt. They have an unpleasant legend of a woman and a dog being cast away together in a boat or on a floe, by way of accounting for the origin of the whites.

Man's spirit, like the spirit of everything else, is immortal, and destined to a future life in bliss, in the region where the Great Spirit presides over a happy community of very prosperous Eskimo, such as has already been described. Those who die on the hunt go to this heaven, also women in childbirth, and those

who die a violent death by any sort of accident. The road to this Eskimo heaven is beset by many obstacles and pitfalls. It is haunted by savage animals, who lie in wait to attack, maim, and kill the wayfarers upon it. Legend has it that at the end of this road, at the rim of this world which is the gate to the next, two huge rocks are set, confronting each other across the narrow path. They sway ominously and often crash together, so that the soul seeking heaven has to run the risk of being caught and crushed between them as he endeavours to get through.

All illness other than that derived from these causes is looked upon as a consequence of sin, i.e., the failure to be a good member of the community, the having been of a quarrelsome turn, bad-tempered, mean or ungenerous, and the having failed to own up to these things when exhorted by the conjuror. When a sick person, having confessed yet dies, it is believed that he had some mental reservation and was not quite honest about his confession. These bad folk go to the Eskimo hell, to the awful realms of Sedna. But a third idea of a sort of purgatory comes in, a place to which the damned can escape before they are finally admitted to bliss. The spirit of the conjuror is able to go below and fight the evil one, and liberate the soul in question. The whole transaction is generally a somewhat expensive one for the relatives.

All animals have their guardian spirits (*Tongak*) who have power over their souls (*Innuua*). The bear,

walrus, killer, ground seal, etc., have the best and strongest familiars. It is the custom for each conjuror to adopt one of these spirits as his own, in order to avail himself of its attributes and powers. The bear is a special favourite, since his *Tongak* is possessed of cunning and intelligence above the ordinary. Sedna, the goddess or protectress of the sea creatures in her briny underworld, controls and safeguards their bodies only; each one's particular *Tongak* controls its soul. The conjuror, in turn, controls the *Tongak*; so this important personage can counteract Sedna's machinations against successful hunting. The hunter invokes the aid of the conjuror, who thereupon causes the *Tongak* of the seals to enter into the man and lead him to success. This familiar companionship is forfeited if the hunter commit some breach of the law and does not confess as much to the witch doctor, or if he fail to pay for the services rendered.

Eskimo mythology is almost an inexhaustible subject. In addition to the active, informing spirit called the *Tongak*, which everyone possesses and which can be invoked for guidance or assistance by every man at his need, all other beings, animate and inanimate, possess an indwelling spirit peculiar to themselves alone. This individual, permanent, presiding spirit is the *Innuu*, something distinct from the patron spirit, the *Tongak*.

The writer has collected an immense mass of notes on the Eskimo deities, as they were described to him



AN UMIK OR FAMILY BOAT.

Used for migrating from place to place.

THE SUMMER TENT OR TAPIK.

This is built of rough poles of drift wood covered with seal skins. It is large enough for a family of six.



by the most creditable of the conjurors. He believes that his list is unique, and offers the student of such matters entirely original material. In it are enumerated no less than fifty of these tutelary spirits, with their personal descriptions (generally uncouth and imaginative to a degree), their supposed habitat—earth, air, or water—and their characteristic activities or patronages.

There is *Keekut*, for instance, a being who lives on the land, in appearance is like a dog without hair, and who works in a more or less maleficent manner. There is *Segook*, a spirit with a head like a crow, a body like that of a human being, and who is black. It has wings. It is a benefactor to the tribesfolk, and brings them meat in its beak. It is fabled to exist upon the eyes of deer and seals. The list is monotonously fabulous, and could only be wearisome to the general reader.

Ataksok lives in the sky. He is like a ball, and has the means of bringing joy to his beholders as often as he may be invoked by the conjurors. *Akseloak* is the spirit of rocking stones. When called upon, he arrives rolling, and falls flat upon his face at the witch doctor's feet. *Ooyarraksakju* is a female spirit, and lives in the rocks and boulders; is beneficent in her activities.

So the list goes on. It would doubtless have a value all its own for the student of primitive imagery or fable, and form an addition to ethnographical researches on the Eskimo; but to give it here in extenso would perhaps serve little or no purpose.

CHAPTER XV

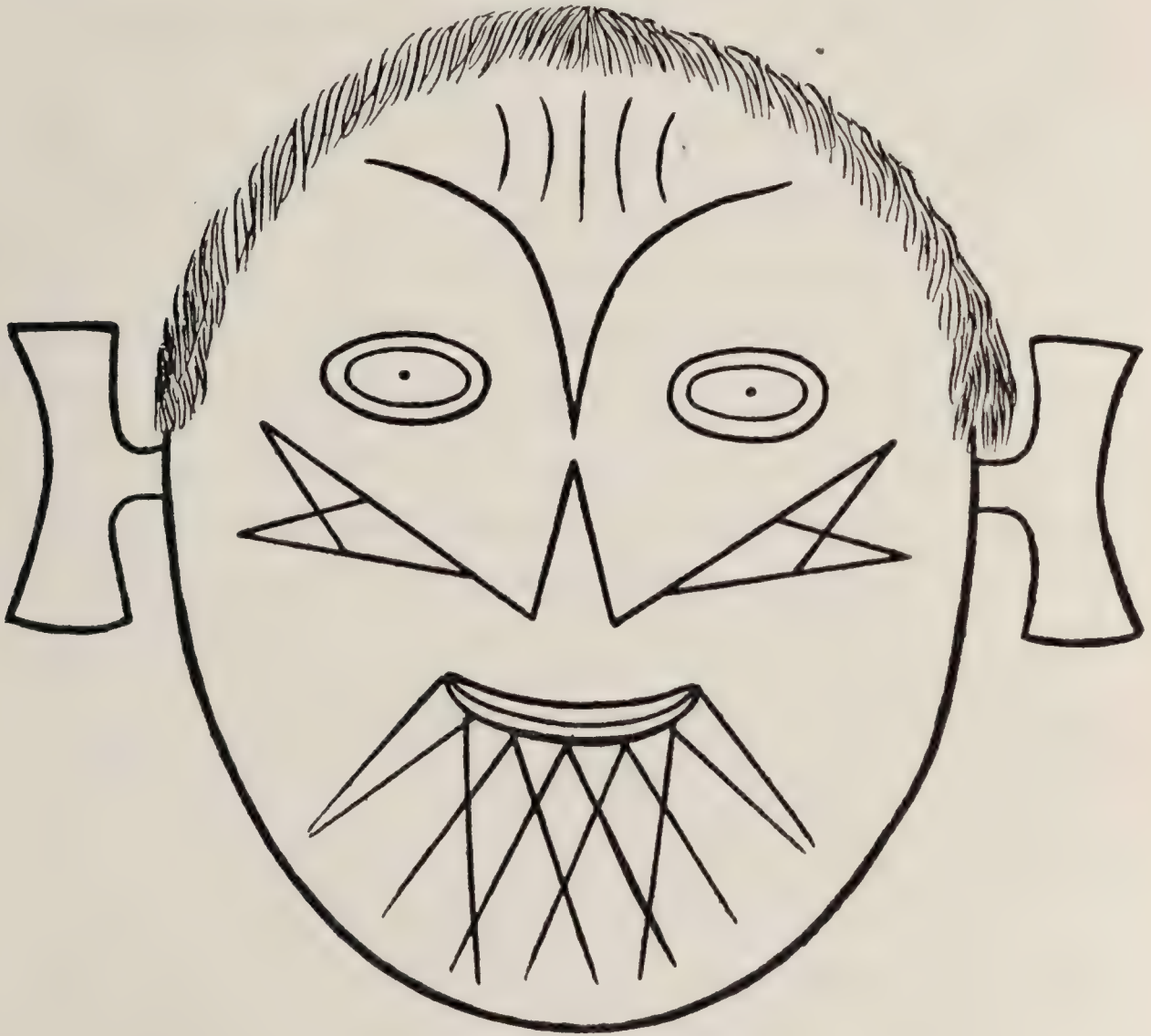
THE SEDNA CEREMONY

AT the end of the arctic summer, before the young ice begins to form again along the shores, there comes a spell of tempestuous weather, with frequent storms and high, rough tides. Food grows more and more scarce as sealing increases in risk and difficulty. Those intrepid hunters who do venture out, return empty-handed day after day, and it grows high time for something to be done. The goddess Sedna is supposed to be causing these storms and all this dirty weather at sea, to prevent her animals being killed. And so a conjuration has to be performed to liberate the seals.

This is the occasion of the most elaborate festival in the Eskimo calendar.

It begins by the conjurors, in full dress, calling the people altogether to dispense them for a short space from their marriage ties. Each witch doctor is masked, and clad in women's clothing. The idea of his amazing get-up, apart from the usual intention to awe the people by grotesqueness or hideousness, is to disguise the face and body, to efface as it were the well-known individual, to make the people lose sight of the conjuror in the representation of a great power

at work among them. His dress is partly that of a man and partly that of a woman, and he carries the usual implements used by both sexes. This is to bring the needs of either before the great power, and to intercede for their respective needs.



A CONJUROR'S MASK.

Mask made of sealskin with hair shaved off, and with tattoo marks, used by ancient Eskimos of Central tribes. This mask is used by the Conjuror at the celebration of the Autumnal Sedna feasts and ceremonies. *Sketch by a Conjuror of the Central Eskimos.*

To begin with, the Angakok wears several pairs of nether garments and boots, until he looks very big and out of his usual proportions. He has a woman's pointed tunic, whose sleeves are elaborately trimmed with fringes and charms. The hood is pulled down

over his head, and he wears a mask of black skin tattooed all over. On his shoulders he carries an inflated sealskin float, and over his arm a coil of walrus hide. In his left hand he bears a woman's skin scraper, and in his right a spear. Thus caparisoned, he emerges from his tent and begins by pairing off the couples.

The tribesfolk are ranged in two long lines, the men and women facing each other, and a lane between. Then the "*Kailuktetak*" (a minor order among the initiate) open the ceremonies. Each conjuror is furnished with a deer-horn scraper like a long curved knife (used in the ordinary course of things for scraping the newly formed ice from the kyaks as they are drawn out of the water), to which is attached a small piece of bearskin. He starts off down the living lane, dancing and shouting in glee, touching first a man and then a woman with the wand as he goes. The two thus indicated pair off, and are man and wife for the next twenty-four hours, or perhaps a little longer. The fun is fast and furious. Much of the whole thing has been prearranged, and the element of surprise is rather subordinate to that of anticipation. The conjurors choose among the women for themselves first, and next for those hunters who have had sufficient eye for beauty and sufficient of this world's goods to mention the fact privately and persuasively beforehand.

There has been quite a stream of visitors to the conjuror's house of late, and quite a number of pre-

sents made, which forgetfulness on the part of that worthy has failed to return. So that the pairing off on this auspicious day is largely a prearranged affair. However, it occasions plenty of Eskimo laughter and delight. The enceinte (and the old folks) are not included in this adventure. They play the part of spectators only, but applaud or deride as heartily as the rest over each mating. These women are *Kooveayootiksatyonerktoot*, i.e., "no-longer-the-material-for-a-rejoicing," having apparently given hostages to fortune already, or having sufficiently fulfilled the hopes of the community. Children are paired off first—boys and girls of no more than twelve years—and then the adults.

Each couple, as they are selected, join hands and walk away towards the man's dwelling, attended for a little distance by the *Kiluktetak* who has picked them out, dancing all round them and about them like a mad thing. If they chance to touch him, they too begin to dance, and to voice their excitement in no uncertain manner. On entering the dwelling, each drinks a little water and mentions the place of his or her birth.

The conjuror has an *âvetak* slung upon his breast, that is, the entire skin of a seal which, inflated, is generally used as a float on the *kyak*. On this day, however, it serves another purpose. As the couple presently return to the *Kilukletak*, they pour water into this, and each individual, drinking from it again and again, mentions the place of his or her birth a

second time. The rite is official, and sets the conjuror's seal upon the proceedings and its consequences.

The root idea of this pairing off is to strengthen a race that might easily be weakened by too much inter-marriage, and to increase the birth-rate. The writer has elsewhere commented on the defensibility of such a custom—from the Eskimo point of view—but it remains to be added here that, as regards parentage, the father of a child is always known and acknowledged, be he the woman's husband or her temporary Sedna mate. The Sedna offspring is cared for by the regular husband, or by the community.

Next comes the extraordinary performance already described, when the conjuror is speared through the chest.

After this, the principal Angakok prepares to give battle to Sedna. The goddess can be killed; but as she subsequently comes to life again, this killing has to take place every year. The whole performance is a representation of seal-spearing on the ice. The conjuror coils a rope on the floor of a large hut, and leaves a little opening at the top to represent the blow hole. Two assistants stand on either side, armed respectively with harpoon and spear. A third chants incantations at the back of the dwelling. Sedna is supposed to be lured from the underworld, and when she comes to the hole, is transfixed at once. She sinks away again, dragging the harpoon with her,

wounded and incensed. The conjurors haul on the line for all they are worth, and recover the weapon.

Then the chief Angakut squats upon the floor, with his arms and legs bound by a length of light hide line. The lamps are pressed down to burn so dimly that it is all but dark. The rest of the folk also sit about the floor with their heads bowed, so that none may stare at the conjuror's face. He begins his incantations, rocking to and fro and uttering sounds that seem incredible for a human throat to compass. He works himself into a state of insensibility (but not before his familiar spirit has undone the knots and released him from his bonds. It is this trance which makes such an impression on the tribesfolk. They believe that the witch doctor's spirit has left his body and their midst, and has really gone to meet and despatch the powerful figment of their myth, to kill her and liberate the seals.

The hardening of the weather soon after this ceremony, when the prospects of the sealers naturally improve, seems to the Eskimo mind a clear demonstration of cause and effect. Probably the conjuror quite believes it, too, and although he has done nothing but hypnotise himself and strike awe thereby into the onlookers, this assumption of all that he accomplishes in the meantime is as real to him as to the others.

After the *Kiluktetak*—the chief of the whole conjuring band—has concluded this séance, he proceeds to make good hunters. Those who are ambitious to

make a name for themselves in this respect, and greatly desire the skins and trappings that come of abundant catches, pay the conjuror a walrus hide line; whereupon he resorts again to his incantations, and his *Tougak* causes the soul of a seal to enter the body or mind of the young man in question. The whole business may perhaps have some result, perforce of suggestion, and the sealer who had hitherto doubted his own judgment or prowess, who had felt discouraged by ill success, or who had failed perhaps in skill or patience, picks up a fortuitous confidence in himself and really has better luck afterwards.

It is impossible to believe that these beliefs and ceremonies would be so widespread among the people and carry so much weight, were no sort of explanation to be sought for them. These folk are trained and accomplished hunters; they attribute their success to *junketings* of this description, and by no means wholly to the obvious care they take to ensure it. If the ceremonies had no value and proved by experience to have no bearing on all these vital matters, even the primitive mind would scarcely perpetuate them for their own sakes pure and simple.

In the meantime, while the *Kiluktetak* has his hands full in the underworld, all sorts of other things are taking place, all sorts of games going on, in the village above.

There is a tug of war with a rope of walrus hide or white whale hide, a contest provocative of uproarious fun, watched by a keen, delighted crowd. One end of

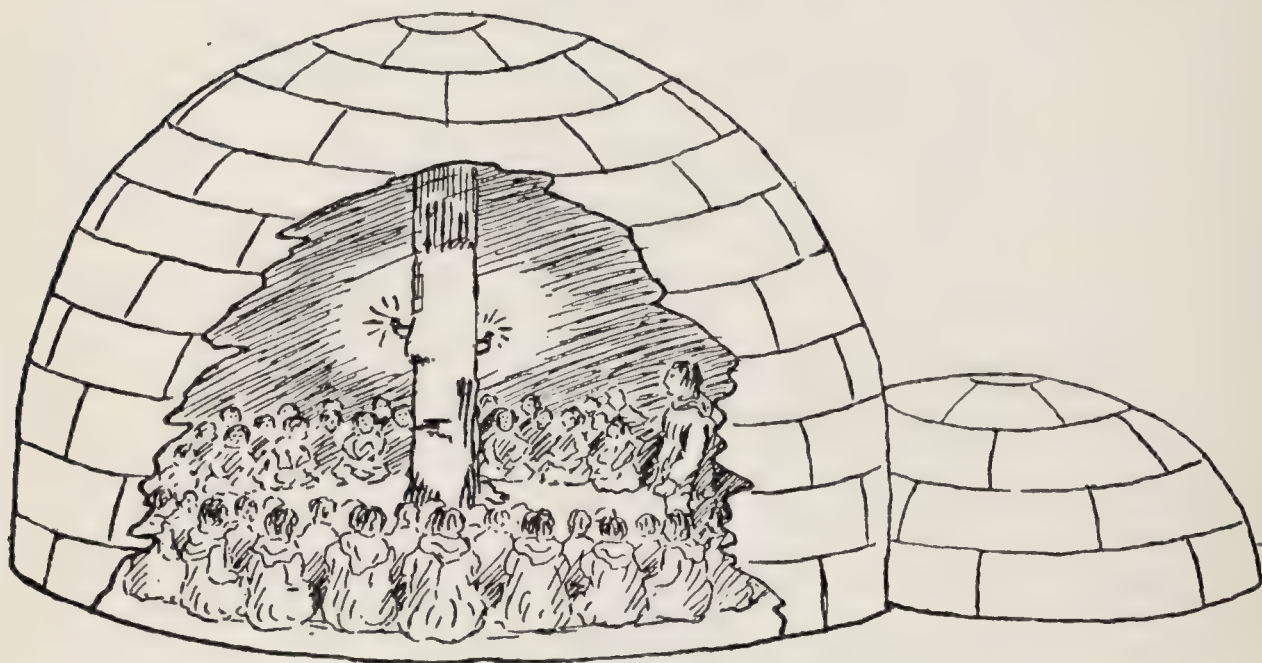
the rope is manned by the "Ptarmigans" (those born in the winter time) and the other by the "Ducks" (those born in summer.) If the former yield to the latter, it is taken as an augury of good weather for the ensuing season.

After this a curious game is played. One of the lesser conjurors is fantastically got up in a number of garments, and in a pair of trousers with very narrow legs. The trousers seem to tickle the Eskimo sense of the ludicrous in exactly the same way as Charlie Chaplin's baggy ones and his "caterpillar" boots tickle ours. He takes a piece of wood in one hand, a skin scraper in the other, and starts capering off, calling on all and sundry to follow him and assemble in the "Kagge," or singing house.

The ceremony in the Kagge was performed in the past but now only the Sedna ceremony is performed, minus the Kagge.

The Eskimo build larger houses than those they usually occupy, for feasting, singing and dancing on particular occasions. The singing house is dedicated to a particular spirit which has the shape of a bow-legged, hairless man. It is generally built upon the usual round plan of the *igloo*, sometimes three being grouped together, apse and transept fashion, with a common entrance (nave). The company disposes itself in concentric rings round the house, married women by the wall, spinsters in front of them, and a ring of men to the front. Children are grouped on either side of the door, and the singer or dancer,

stripped to the waist, takes his stand amid them and remains on the one spot all the time. A pillar of snow in the middle of the house supports as many lamps as it requires to illuminate the proceedings and to warm the air. Singing festivals and competitions in the Kagge especially mark the great occasion of the tribal deer hunting in the spring, so that it will be



A KAGGE OR SINGING HOUSE. (ELEVATION.)

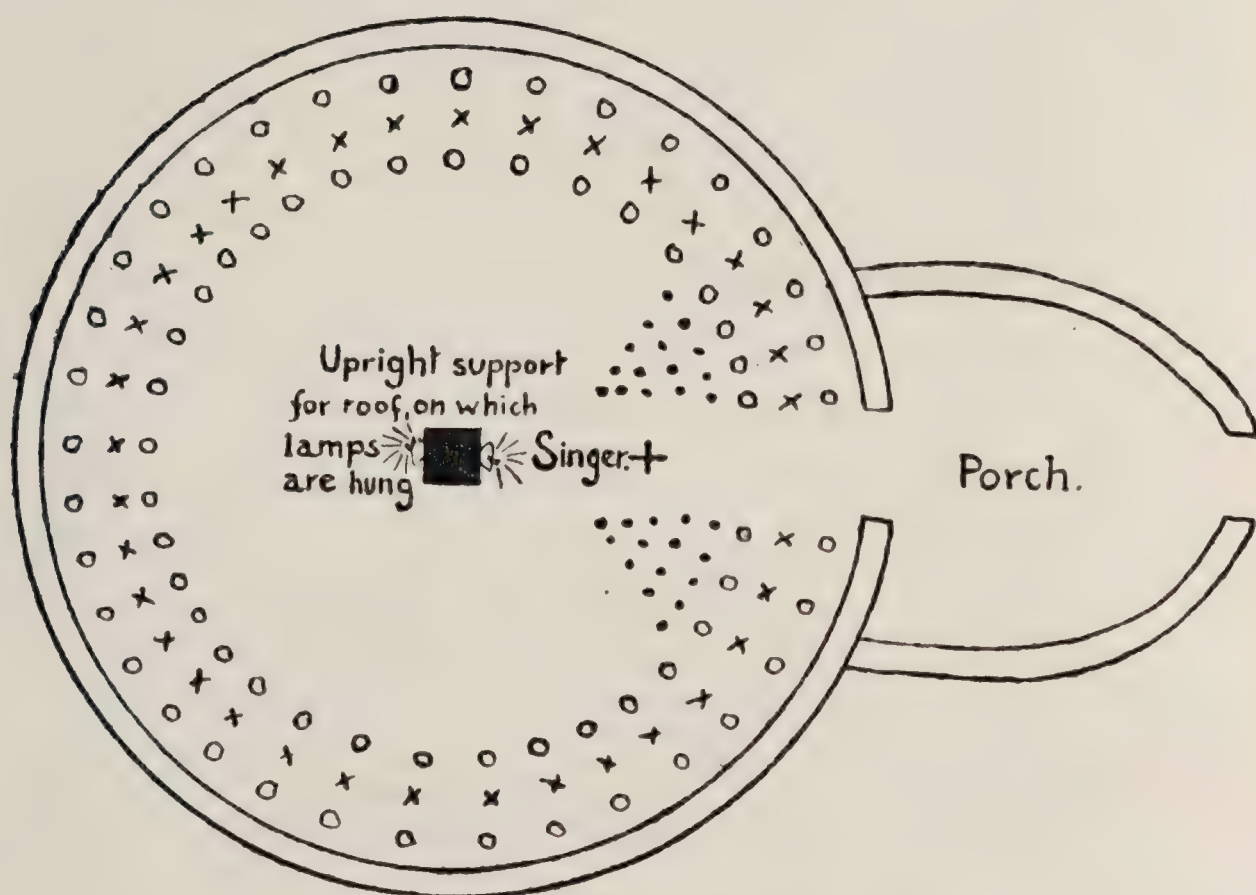
Singing competitions at the assembly of the tribes are held in these. The songs are composed by the singer, the audience joining in the chorus, the head men and conjurors being judges. Much fun and merriment are caused by the songs.

described at somewhat greater length in that connection.

As soon as everyone has crowded in, all the new made (temporary) couples are bidden to join hands and guide each other out. Everyone is laughing, but the pair in question have to preserve the gravity of owls. If they yield to the infectious merriment and badinage going on, and fail to keep absolutely solemn faces, some grievous sickness will befall them. The conjuror touches their feet as they cross the threshold,

and when he himself follows out the last pair, blows off hard, like a seal.

At the risk of wearying the reader with the apparent uncouthness of all this (an alien humour is always hard to perceive), one more incident of the festival must be given.



A KAGGE OR SINGING HOUSE. (PLAN.)

The *Mukkosaktok* possesses himself of a whip with a particularly short handle, and starts on a tour of the village on his own account. He enters the first house he comes to, and starts to lay about him in play. He fillips one of the inmates with the end of his lash, and orders him to sing a song—an extempore song of his own composition. If the victim fails, another one has to take his place, and so in turn until the circle is exhausted. This goes on in every household, all sorts

of weird howls and chants and guttural distiches being elicited by *force majeure*, until at last the *Muk-kosaktok* is playfully hustled to the door and pushed outside.

The underlying idea of much of all this is doubtless that of promoting sociability and good feeling all round. The Eskimo are an intensely sociable people, and, to the very limited extent of their powers and opportunities, delight in entertainment. These festival songs, for instance, have required a certain amount of preparation. They are composed about some event that has taken place and caught the singer's attention. They have been rehearsed and, if successful, will be repeated all through the long winter nights, when the folk spend so much weather-bound time in visiting each other and exchanging tales and gossip round the *igloo* lamps. No tribesman likes to be laughed at, so he really does his best over his song.

There is a real groundwork of sense about the ceremony of visiting each house in turn, and the scramble for presents. In the first place, it is a symbol of goodwill and plenty. Each householder is expected to keep up appearances by doing this sort of thing, and he uses every effort to gain the wherewithal to meet the obligation. This militates against laziness and any tendency to hoard—great crimes in the Eskimo estimation of things. The hunter strains every nerve to provide the things his neighbours scramble for, and the women of the village do their utmost, so far as attractiveness and domesticity go,

to attach such men as husbands. Again, by a general scramble, the poorer and less lucky folk get a good many windfalls otherwise unobtainable.

The roysterers flock off in a body, to make the round of the encampment, stopping at every man's house in turn. The owner goes inside, makes a selection of all sorts of unconsidered trifles—generally bits of sealskin used for the legs of boots, with different kinds of sewing sinew attached—and, returning to the vociferous crowd waiting outside, scatters these things broadcast. There is a grand commotion and no end of noise, as the oddments are battled for. As this performance is repeated at every house in the village it necessarily takes some time.

Little information is obtainable as to the significance of these games or ceremonies, or whatever the Eskimo themselves may consider them. The annual pairing off doubtless serves to keep up the numbers of the tribe. Women are always in excess of men, owing to hunting fatalities among the latter, and other causes; and some of these, although married, may be childless. The Sedna proceedings tend to remedy this state of things to a satisfactory extent. The writer's own idea is that, in addition to the main responsibilities of the festival, which rest on the shoulders of the *Kiluktetok*, the doings of the lesser lights of the order of conjurors are designed more or less to keep things going merrily and to establish themselves firmly in the good-will of the community.

The main idea of the frequent acknowledgment of

breaches of village law is undoubtedly to keep the social life intact, to ensure that no secrecies and plottings shall break it up, and no hoarding of supplies lead to quarrels and injustices. Another feature of the Sedna day is a general "confessing" of all these "sins." Another lesser luminary, called a *Noonageeksaktoot*, dresses himself up in a medley of garments and dons a close-fitting cap made from the skull of a ground seal. This cap has a peak, to represent a bird's bill. He binds upon his feet some of the sticks used for beating snow from clothes, so that they resemble a raven's, and hops about in imitation of that bird. As often as the people come up and accuse themselves of wrongdoing, he betakes himself to the beach, to tell Sedna, and returns with forgiveness.

It will be readily understood that it is of great value in the hard fight for existence in the arctic that a spirit of hope and cheerfulness should be maintained. No one knows this better than the commander of an arctic or antarctic expedition, or than the head of a trading station! It is quite essential that the Eskimo village should make itself a centre of jollity and comfort to the returning hunters, and to travellers on the trail. There are sound economic principles underneath the queer trappings of some of all this barbaric custom, and even sound hygienic laws governing some of the regulations and taboos of daily life. That one, for instance, which forbids a woman in childbirth to eat any food not provided by her hus-

band, probably acts quite beneficially. Eskimo food is very rich and often consumed in the raw state, so that a glut of it, as would result from a shower of benefactions, would upset the new-made mother.

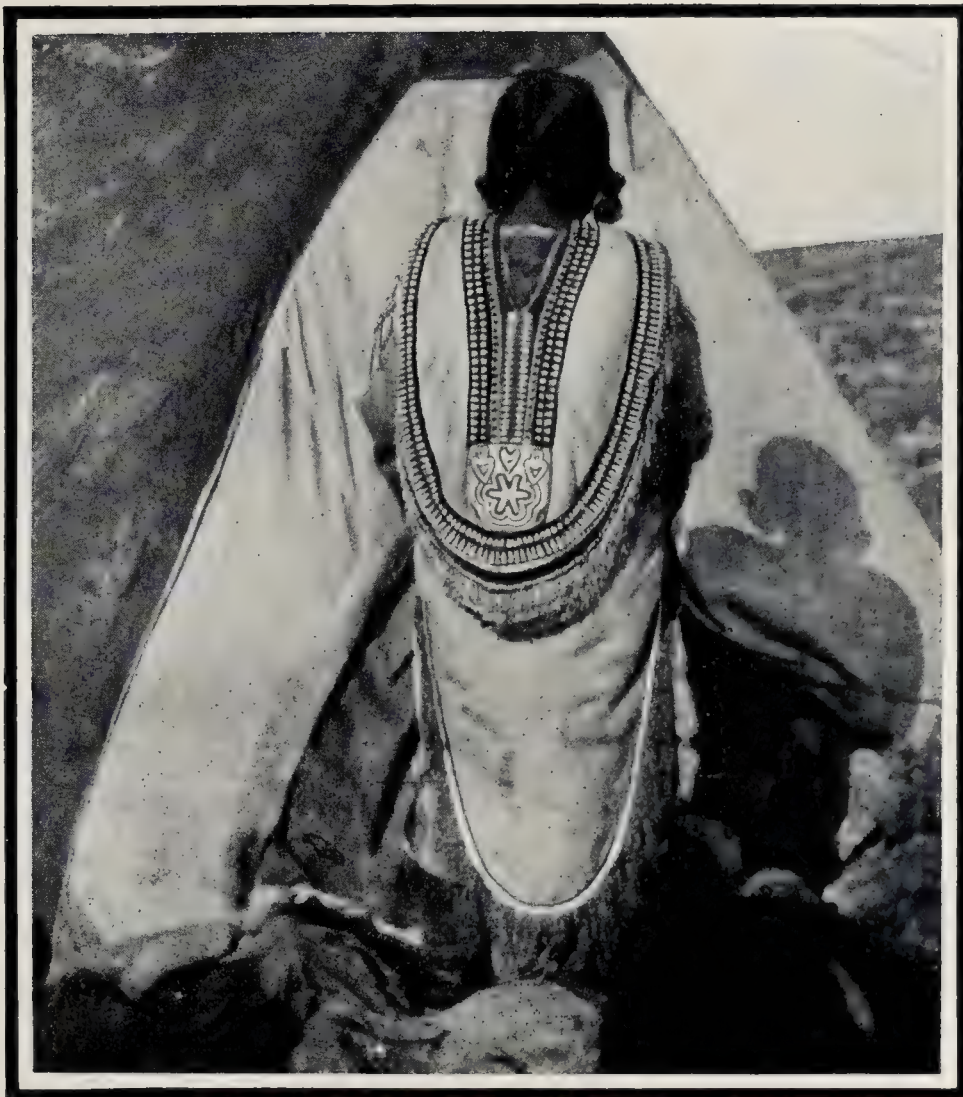
The Sedna ceremony has been carefully studied by the best ethnologists, like Dr. Boas, who have travelled for the sake of science among the arctic tribes; but it may be hazarded that the *raison d'être* of much of it could only dawn on an observer who had actually lived for a very considerable time in close personal and linguistic touch with the people.

The writer offers his interpretations with all diffidence, but believes they constitute something original to the descriptions of other writers. Those who easily dismiss the whole subject as fantastic savagery, much of which is unfit for publication, seem singularly to have failed in any real grasp of the character of these benighted, but in many ways cheery and genuine, children of the sternest wild in the world.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIVE SURGEON

ONE of the principal offices of the native conjuror is to find out the reason of sickness and death, or of any misfortune or disaster happening to the tribesfolk. But in this matter of primitive medicine, the Eskimo are probably far behind the untutored folk of other uncivilised peoples, for the simple reason that, unlike the dwellers in temperate or tropical and therefore vegetated regions of the world, they have nothing with which to experiment, in sickness, by way of herbs and simples. An absolutely barren land, covered for the most part of the year with snow, provides no material for the empirical pharmacist. Eskimo medical practice consists entirely in incantation, in dealings with the spirit world, and in the exercise of an amazing and complicated system of fetish and taboo, i.e., the doing or refraining from doing all sorts of unreasonable things to attain or produce some desired end. In surgery, the conjuror is no less intrepid, if considerably more lucky (thanks to an air so pure as to be almost sterile) than the ghastly practitioners of West Africa, whose appalling anatomical ventures are described in Mary Kingsley's unrivalled book of travel in the Cameroons.



AN ESKIMO WOMAN OF THE FOX CHANNEL TRIBE.
She is wearing very elaborate bead work on the back of her deerskin dress.

AN ESKIMO SUMMER ENCAMPMENT.
These tents, although large, are easily packed and moved.

The arctic folk seem to have no glimmering of an idea as to natural cause and effect in sickness. Bodily ills and death, to them, admit of only one explanation. The sufferer has in some way or other in some particular transgressed the communal law. The disorders of women are considered as a punishment for the infringement of some of the meticulous regulations laid down for their observance at certain times. Hence the first business of the conjuror on being summoned to a sick bed, is to scare or worry the invalid into the remembrance and acknowledgment of whatever he or she may have done contrary to the general well-being of the village. He does this after his usual fashion, by crawling into the *igloo* in some particularly horrid guise, and sitting down in the darkened place with his face to the wall and his features well concealed by his hood, giving vent to the most horrific howls, mutterings, ventriloquisms and unhuman-sounding noises, at his ingenious command. Then he proceeds to interrogate the sick person, and of course wrings some acknowledgment from him or her. Treatment—of sorts—may ensue; but as a rule the issue of commands as to atonement or compensation is the wind-up of what the Americans would aptly describe as the whole “stunt.” Occasionally a piece of flaming moss wick from one of the lamps is laid upon the painful part of the sufferer’s body and fanned with the conjuror’s breath, or merely blown up into the air. All real attempt at cure is left to nature, and it must be added that the recuperative

powers of a hearty-eating, hardy, healthy-blooded people like the tribes of Eskimo, are quite remarkable.

Eskimo flesh has wonderful healing power. The writer has seen the most fearful gashes quickly close and heal up without any precautions or dressing whatever. One case he certainly thought would have a fatal termination. A hunter was repairing his implements, a small box of tools lying on the ground beside him. A large file without a handle happened to be sticking straight up out of the box. The man's foot slipped on the ice and he fell, in a sitting posture, straight upon the file. He sustained a deep punctured wound. It was merely bandaged with some very dirty strips of soiled skin underclothing, and inflammation and intense suppuration presently set in. At no time did the wound receive any further attention, but in due course the hunter was about again, as though nothing had happened.

Something, however, must be said for the conjuror as an anatomist. By virtue of his calling and of his continual dealing with animals of all kinds, he knows the positions of joints, muscles, ligaments, veins and arteries, and can find any one of them. Some men have more aptitude in this respect than others, and these occasionally act as surgeons. A young woman, who may be called Omanetok, the daughter of one of the minor conjurors, developed a large mysterious swelling in the groin. There was acute inflammation, pointing to deep-seated pus in accumulation. A native surgeon was called in, and

after examination he pronounced for an immediate operation. He decided to lance the swelling. A time was arranged, and by special request the writer was allowed to be present.

The surgeon arrived, accompanied by two hefty fellows as assistants (his "dressers," probably, in an enhanced state of things!) His lancet consisted of a rough piece of all-round, useful steel, inserted into a piece of ivory by way of a handle. The blade was about two inches long and had a rounded end instead of anything so convenient as a sharp point. This blade had, however, been filed, in an attempt at an edge. In addition, there was a small oilstone. Both stone and instrument were very dirty. The operator began by spitting on the oilstone and sharpening the lancet upon it, afterwards wiping the latter with a soiled piece of birdskin previously used for scouring out the cooking pots.

The patient was then "prepared" by her mother. She was laid flat upon the bed bench, and the part to be operated upon was exposed. The surgeon, wetting his fingers in his mouth, proceeded to moisten and slightly cleanse (!) the skin. Then the two assistants grasped Omanetok by the legs, her mother held her head, and two more helpers held her well down by the shoulders. The conjuror inserted the lancet simply by pressing on it and sawing it in, backwards and forwards, until it had gone deep enough to reach the pus. Omanetok squirmed considerably, but her nurses had her well in hand. The contents of the

swelling were expelled by repeated pressure, and wiped away from time to time with a little bit of dirty mouse or lemming skin. When this was finished, the wound was covered by a piece of lemming skin, licked by the operator's tongue and stuck on over the place.

Two days afterwards the patient was walking about, well and jolly as ever she had been in her life.

Apropos of the extraordinary command the conjurors universally exercise over the people, and of the paramount psychic influence they establish in the community, it is not too much to say that they hold every man's life in their hands. We know how the fatalistic-minded Asiatic can die by auto-suggestion. The Eskimo, too, dies by suggestion, even when strongly against his will.

A fully qualified practitioner, well known for a sensual and self-indulgent man, was particularly tenacious of his purposes and able to bide him time. He had long desired the good-looking half-breed wife of a certain hunter, and had frequently approached the man on the question. Contrary to the general rule, in this instance he was consistently refused. Now, Moneapik, the hunter, was a skilful fellow, well able to provide himself and his wife with food and clothing. He was careful, too, and rather exclusive, not liking to squander his gains upon the lazy folk of the village, after the generally accepted fashion. For this reason he was unpopular. He had his own circle of friends, however, and was content not to enlarge it. The conjuror had nothing to work upon

so far as Moneapik was concerned, except the latter's superstition. The man was neither poor, nor feckless, nor friendless.

At length a long spell of bad weather set it, bringing in its train a season of sickness and semi-starvation. The conjuror was expected to set matters right by his arts and incantations; but on this occasion he had only a signal failure to register. He loudly excused himself for it on the ground that the spirits were profoundly offended by the unsociable practices of Moneapik. He had committed the heinous offence of keeping largely to himself; he had not given freely to the tribesfolk. Only by his death could the powers be propitiated and the famine ended. The majority of the villagers were prone enough to agree with this, for over and over again the hunter had set their greed at nought. Whereupon the conjuror boldly faced the man, stated the incontrovertible facts, pronounced his death sentence, and departed saying: "I command you to die!"

Moneapik was a strong, healthy man, in the prime of life and the pink of condition. Normally, he should have lived to a ripe old age. But so ingrained was his belief in the conjuror, in his power to get into communication with the spirit world, that this command was virtually fatal. He said: "I am commanded to die!" He gave up his active occupations, withdrew into his tent, ate and drank very sparingly, and within four days was dead. They sewed up the body in skin blankets and left it on the rocks of a neighbouring

island, to be devoured by foxes. The writer visited the spot a few days later—but only bones remained.

Friends had indeed visited Moneapik in his tent before the end, and argued with him, laughed at him, tried by every possible means to disabuse the man's mind of its obsession. But all in vain. The victim's sole response was, "I am commanded to die!" And die he did, although it was by no means a death from starvation. It was death by suggestion.

The conjuror, of course, obtained his own ends.

An account has already been given of the conjuror spearing himself in the breast during the Sedna ceremony, and appearing no whit the worse for it shortly afterwards. Although this extraordinary action may often perhaps be simulated by a trick, (the performer concealing a bladder of blood under his tunic and merely stabbing that), there seems to be sufficient evidence that such feats are within the compass of the genuine practitioner. No less authority than Dr. Boas gives an instance of an Angatok, on the island of Utussivik, who thrust a harpoon through his body and was led through the village by twenty-five men. Another conjuror, at a place called Umanaqtuaq, on finishing his incantations, "jumped up and rushed out of the hut, to where a mounted harpoon was standing. He threw himself upon the harpoon, which penetrated his breast and came out at the back. Three men followed him, and holding the harpoon line led the Angatok, bleeding profusely, to all the huts in the village. When they arrived again at the first hut,

he pulled out the harpoon, lay down on the bed, and was put to sleep by the song of another Angatok. When he awoke after a while he showed the people he was not hurt, although his clothes were torn and they had seen him bleeding." (Monograph on the Central Eskimo, by Dr. Boas.)

The underlying idea in the treatment of all sickness (as distinguished from accident) being that some spirit is offended and is punishing the delinquent, it becomes necessary to discover what custom has not been complied with or what observance has been omitted, or what prohibition has been neglected. The science of divining what spirit, too, is antagonised, comprises perhaps the whole volume of Eskimo fetish and superstition. The conjuror knows beforehand, of course, the character and the failings of any individual he may be called upon to attend. He makes a shrewd guess from hearsay what the man may have been doing, and by skilful questions and half accusations, manages pretty generally to get at the core of the matter and extort more or less genuine (if wholly irrelevant) confession.

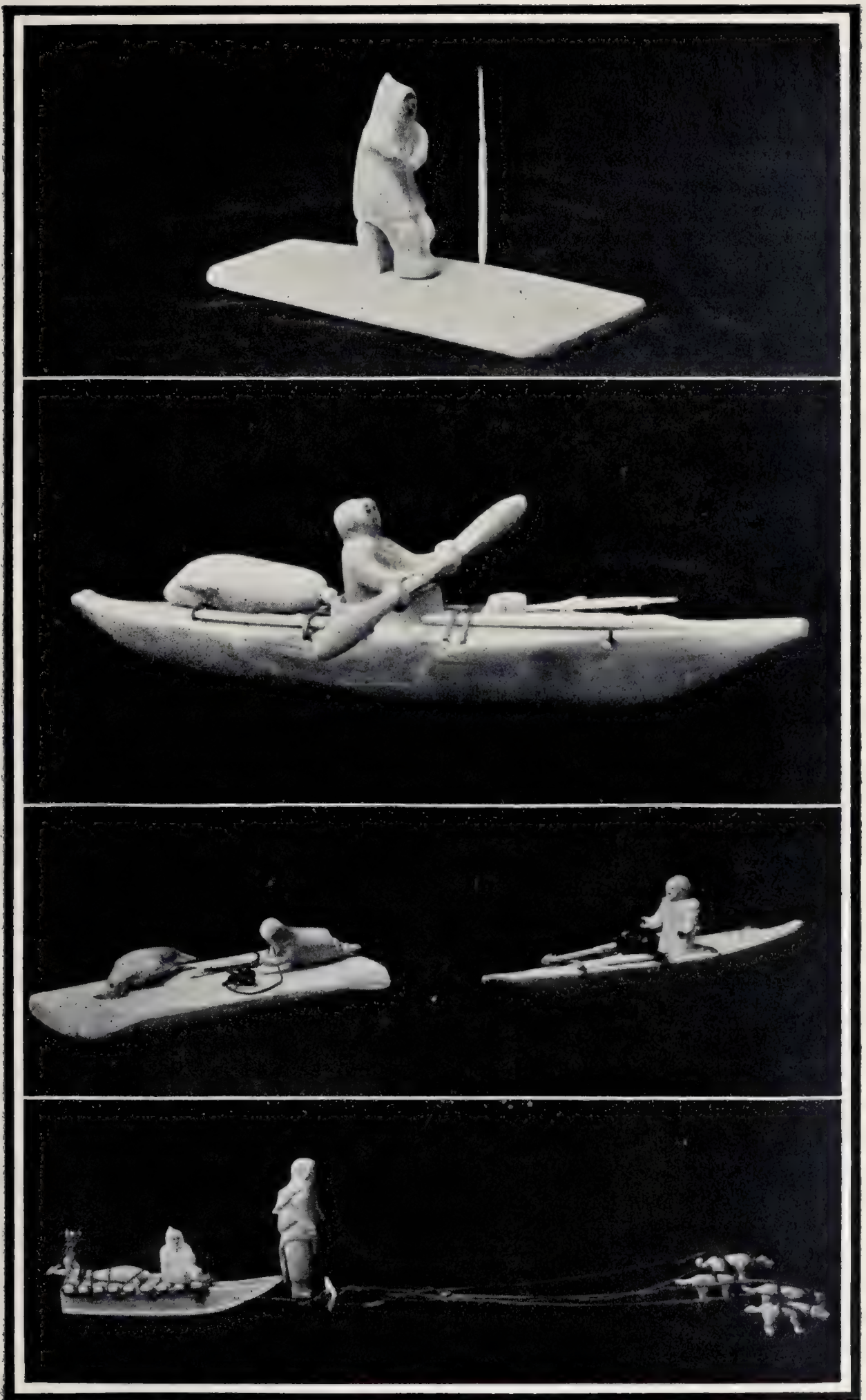
There are some crimes for which there is no forgiveness, such as having communion with the dead, especially the *Toopelat*, i.e., the earth-bound spirits of indifferent folk. If the sick man confesses to this, there is no hope of cure for him. Adown the long interrogatory we come upon a few questions which illumine the apparent nonsense of all the rest with gleams of good human sense and logic: Have you

stolen from the sick? Have you greatly lied about your neighbours or your race? Have you been abusive to the old folk? And—for a woman—have you concealed a miscarriage?

Otherwise the questions turn upon whether the patient (if a woman) has worked upon forbidden sorts of skins, i.e., heavy and arduous work likely to upset her (if she is enceinte), at certain seasons; whether the meat of land and sea creatures has been eaten at the same meal; whether shell fish were gathered when seal should have been hunted; whether lamps were cleaned during a time of taboo, etc., etc. The underlying idea of half these prohibitions is lost in the obscurity of time immemorial, and the Eskimo to-day can account for them no better than by saying, "As our fathers did, so do we."

The invalid thoroughly believes in the authority and omniscience of the conjuror. He racks his brains for the remembrance of some breach of the unwritten social law, and generally succeeds in the effort, and so complies with what is required of him. Should he be so grievously ill, however, that the conjuror can elicit no sort of response, should the sickness be obviously leading to death, the failure of all these proceedings is taken as proof positive that a crime has been committed beyond the power of the witch doctor's machinations to palliate, because beyond the power of the spirits to forgive.

In any less serious case the practitioner has a peculiar method whereby to determine the probable



SPECIMENS OF NATIVE IVORY CARVING.

- (1) A hunter sitting at a seal hole. (2) A Kayak off for a day's hunt. (3) Hunter spearing seal in the springtime. (4) Hunter and his wife returning from a day's sealing.

duration of the sickness, and also its gravity. He has among his assistants minor conjurors called the head or leg lifter, as the case may be; and an incantor whose business it now becomes to squat upon the floor with covered head and improvise a chant for the occasion. He is called the *Kunneyo*.

As soon as this wail begins the others assistants bind a piece of wood upon the sick man's head with a length of thong, and lift it tentatively as if in the act of weighing it, asking the spirit meanwhile wherein the patient has offended. If the head is inert and heavy feeling, he is judged to be guilty; if it feels light, he is innocent. Sometimes the wood is bound upon the leg, and this is lifted instead of the head. When this examination is over and the patient has promised to comply with any orders given him, the conjuror commands, "Let the bindings be cast off." This is done, and he pursues, "Let the cause of guilt be cast away, and let him recover."

The penalty imposed often takes the form of some abstinence to be observed for a time. When the illness has been brought about by gluttony or exposure, this injunction, joined to a period of rest and quietness, may prove quite enough to restore the patient to his accustomed health. Nature does her own work. Should there have been some real fear or disquiet of mind, the whole thing simply resolves itself into a faith cure. Incidentally, the Angatok maintains his inflated authority, and earns a fat livelihood. He exacts payment, of course—a dog, a sled, a skin, a

length of line, and the favours of the patient's wife; and prescribes the use of various charms. These charms may be a fringe of deer or bearskin, a spider or beetle sewn up in a piece of skin, worn on boot or breast or back, as directed. Most potent of all is a scrap of the garment worn during the first year of life, and this is always affixed to the cap or hood. Then, of course, a present has to be given to the spirit. Some small article is placed among the rocks and dedicated.

CHAPTER XVII

SPORT AND HUNTING

A WHOLE book could be written on Eskimo sport and on the Eskimo methods of hunting generally. These methods are based, of course, on an intimate knowledge and experience of the habits and characters of the arctic birds and animals. Something has already been said in this connection about seals and seal hunting. But a little space must now be devoted to some account of a few more of these methods and adventures.

With the coming of March, the sealing season has set in. The days begin to draw out, the sun climbs higher in the heavens, and even sheds a faint warmth now on the lee side of shelter, if there be no movement in the air. The seals are arriving in droves, and their young are being born in their caves under the snow, all over the wide expanse of the ice off shore.

A spirit of restlessness seizes upon the tribesfolk. The hunting weapons are gladly brought out for examination and getting in readiness; the small hunting sleds are put in order; the heavy winter deerskin clothing is laid aside and the lighter garments of summer sealskin put in thorough repair, to don as

soon as the tribe shall be ready to move off en masse to the sealing grounds. Mysterious meetings take place between the Angakooeet and the chiefs, when the spring campings are fully discussed and arranged among them.

At last the great day arrives when, with much shouting and bustle, the sleds are loaded and the dogs harnessed. Each hunter and his wife assemble and pack their belongings—the lamp, the cooking pot, the box of small tools, the large knife for building (i.e., for cutting out blocks of snow), spears, lines, spare skins for clothing, etc., etc., etc. The baby is popped into the mother's hood; the boy takes up his station by the team, to learn to drive and manage it, and with many a shout, much touching of noses in farewell, cracking of whips, laughter and joking, each outfit pulls out and drives away, off into the frozen bay.

The old folk are left behind in the village, to await the end of the season, to dress the skins brought in to them every now and again by boys returning from the camps. Sealmeat abounds; everyone gorges to Eskimo repletion and lives in luxury. The ground is covered with skins, pegged out to dry in the sun, prior to being scraped, washed, and prepared for making up.

The newly flensed hide is first freed from its inner layer of fat and blubber, and this is rendered down for oil for the lamps. The fur is then washed with warm water to remove the grease. Then small holes are pierced all round the edge of the skin, and the

whole is pegged out to its full extent on a frame, or merely on the ground, to dry and sweeten and bleach in the genial brightness of the arctic spring day. After this process, the inner membrane is first pared off, and the skin is ready to be tailored. Everyone left behind in the village on shore is kept busy at this sort of work.

As the spring sealing season wears on towards the arctic summer, an entire change comes over the activities of the tribesfolk. They have, now, to prepare for the long trail inland to the feeding ground of the deer. Stacks of provisions are accumulated, and the boats and kyaks got ready for the trip to the head of the fiord, whence the expedition will make its start. The framework of the *umiaks* is carefully examined, and new pieces put in where required. All thongs and lashings are strengthened or renewed; secondary skins in former times were prepared as boat coverings, to be discarded when they became so waterlogged as to check the pace. As a rule, one of these large travelling boats is owned and shared by several families, and will contain the whole of their effects.

At length these preparations are complete. The day comes when a general packing up absorbs all the energies of the tribe. Tents are struck and folded away at the bottom of the boat, together with big consignments of sealskin buckets and hunting weapons. The women ship the ponderous and unhandy oars, children and dogs pile in on top of everything, and

the men take up their travelling stations fore and aft, in readiness to defend the transport from any sort of attack, or to launch a harpoon at any likely prey.

They pull away joyously and hilariously on the great summer trip. As often as the wind will allow they hoist the great square sail made of seal intestine, and one member of the crew takes up a station beside it with a water bucket, to keep it constantly wet. Otherwise it would dry, and split into ribbons before the breeze. At the present day canvas sails are used.

Every now and again, as they coast along among the islands, they put in here or there for fresh supplies of drinking water. At night they fetch some well-known point for an encampment. The *umiaks* are moored, heather and driftwood collected, fires lit, kettles slung, and the evening stew set to simmer, while the men forage afield for the next day's provender. Then, rolling themselves up in their blankets, the travellers drop off to sleep right there on the ground, under the shelter of whatever cover it may afford, to be up and under way again before sunrise next morning.

The days pass very pleasantly. The scenery is grand, the weather clear and sunny; the water, gemmed with islands dark brown and green, is still as a mill-pond. The fleet of primitive, uncouth-looking skin boats, filled with barbaric northern folk with tattooed faces and guttural speech, reproduces a picture of pre-historic times. Many of these scenes of Eskimo life and enterprise are deserving of record

by the best of artists, if only to bring before us in these effete days of over-civilisation a vivid, still existent, picture of the very earliest adventures of the human race.

At length the head of the inlet is reached. The boats proceed up river at high tide to the appointed place of debarkation. Here the *umiaks* are hauled well inshore, unloaded, dismantled, and turned over, to be covered with a pile of stones against the time of the hunter's return. The personal treasures of the women are also hidden away in some safe cavity among the rocks, and left there. Then the loads are carefully apportioned all round, and made up in bundles according to the strength of their carriers. The men bear the weapons and ammunition only and travel light, in order to go on ahead and secure game on the trail. Children are lightly loaded, and the old people carry nothing but their own belongings; so that the bulk of the heavy transport falls on the able-bodied women of the tribe. Each one toils along under tent poles and coverings, piles of skins and meat, and the baby of the family into the bargain. The whole staggering load is hoisted on to the woman's back and secured by lashings round the waist and a broad leather band round the forehead. She is almost wholly eclipsed by the enormous burden.

So they file off, one by one, from the point of landing, and make their way to the uplands and the appointed general meeting place of all the tribes engaged upon the annual hunt. Thither many such

parties converge: the people from Fox Channel, the tribe from the neighbourhood of Kikkuktâkjuak, or Big Island, the Saddlebacks, the *Noovingmeoot* from Frobisher Bay, and as many more from north, south, east and west. They time themselves all to arrive as punctually as possible. The spot is a high plateau among the hills, at the head of the inlet described above.

When at last all the tribes have assembled, the elders hold a general meeting and decide upon the direction and the details of the prospective hunt. As soon as this important business is settled the people give themselves up *en masse* to a few days' holiday-making.

It is the height of arctic summer; food abounds; and friends meet each other once again after a year of separation. The people are care-free and happy. No danger threatens from any direction. So that Eskimo good spirits attain their highest pitch, and for a short time the people abandon themselves to their every hospitable and sociable instinct, to their love of jollity and fun, to sports all day, to singing, entertainments, feasting and story-telling of an evening and well into the night.

The sports are inter-tribal. There are running and wrestling matches, too, races and competitions of all sorts. The youth are keenly aware of being watched by the bright, sloe-eyed, laughing girls, and of being criticised or applauded by the elders. As true a sporting spirit of emulation, good temper and fair play ob-



AN ESKIMO IN HIS KAYAK.

With white whales in tow.

BEGINNING TO BUILD A SNOW HOUSE.

The first tier of snow blocks.

tains in this far-away arctic festival as on the famous "playing fields of Eton," and as many a romance comes of it as well. For this is an immensely important social and fashionable function among these primitive folk, and men and maidens meet and strike many a match of their own.

There are contests with the bow and arrow. Poles are fixed in the ground with skins suspended from them to represent deer and seals. The vital spot, of course, is the Eskimo idea of the bull's eye. The spear-throwing competition calls for a high degree of skill. From the top of a fixed, inclined pole, a line is carried to the earth, having an ivory ring tied in it half way down. This ring is carefully concealed by fringes of hide, and the spear throwers, stationed at a recognised distance away, have to cast their weapons deftly through it. The attempt demands the greatest accuracy of vision and training of the hand. The contests are very keen, and great *éclat* awaits those who distinguish themselves. Their names become household words round the *igloo* lamps all during the succeeding winter, much as those of crack footballers become familiar to the sporting manhood of this country.

In the evening come the singing contests—quite one of the most important features of the annual festival. Ethnologists generally are agreed that the Eskimo excel in poetry and music. Improvisation with them is a recognised art. Every man is something of a composer, and is called upon whenever festivities are

in progress to contribute a number of his own to the improvised concert. The form of these songs is quite strict, and the melodies, even to unaccustomed European ears, may be reduced to accepted notation. Travellers who have but a superficial acquaintance with the arctic folk, distinguish little in the extempore contests of the Kagge or of the Sedna ceremony but sheer barbaric cacophony—yowlings, yells, and monotonous and seemingly endless repetition. But there are some to whom Gregorian chant itself conveys but little more!

These Eskimo songs deal with any and every subject which may occur to the singer, those of a satirical or personal or topical character proving the most popular. The contests give rise to untold amusement and delight. Nothing is more appreciated in the whole round of the programme. As a rule, the competitors are only men. The “ptarmigans” (i.e., those born at the end of winter or beginning of spring) challenge the “ducks” (or those born in the summer). Each side extols its own prowess in hunting, its natal advantages, etc., etc., to the detriment of the other. All sorts of ridicule is poured upon the opposite party, causing the wildest merriment among the auditors, who shriek with laughter at each successful or witty sally, clap their hands, and vociferate over the comedian who wins the contest. The Eskimo have a very lively sense of fun, and appreciate each home thrust and happy skit every bit as keenly as a Cockney music-hall audience.

The Kagge, or singing house, of the summer deer-hunt is, like that of the Sedna ceremony, a big round house, similarly tenanted by the people in circles around the walls. The summer Kagge is built of sod and stones. The women wear skin gloves—the backs black and the palms white—and take their station behind everybody else, with the children. The men come next, and the Angakooeet, as judges, sit in the front circle. The centre of the house is left vacant for the performers.

The first part of the entertainment consists of songs describing the exploits of the dead and gone heroes and hunters of the tribe, each song having a refrain which is taken up by the women, who sway their bodies from side to side as they sing, so raising and lowering their arms as to show first a circle of waving white and then a circle of waving black hands. Many of these songs are old-established favourites, extemporised at first by some individual as his own contribution to some occasion, which “caught on” and became part of the tribe’s collective musical tradition.

After these come the extempore efforts of the current evening. Each man contributes a song of his own, turning upon some event in his career, or some more or less poetic fancy which has occurred to him. The songs have probably been composed and polished, and possibly practised, in private for some time, but the contest is the occasion of their publication to the musical world. They are most attentively received, and judged by the Angakooeet.

The outstanding event of the evening, to which all look forward on the tip-toe of expectation, is the tournament of satires between the ptarmigans and the ducks. A ball of thoroughly good-tempered musical ridicule is tossed backwards and forwards between each pair of singers, accompanied by roars of laughter from the auditors, who hold their sides and roll in ecstasies of enjoyment. Tears of merriment stream down the women's faces.

This sort of thing goes on night after night for as long as a whole week; and only at the end of that time does the gathering begin to break up, and set about the prodigious business of getting on with the summer's work.

As soon as this interlude of festivity and recreation is concluded, the tribes separate, each bound for its own appointed sphere of hunting operations, independently of the others. The new camp is soon pitched in some sheltered valley where there is a running stream, but not too close to the selected district, for fear of alarming the shy quarry. The men then go daily to search the hills and stalk the deer.

As soon as a herd is located, word is passed down to the camp, and the women rally to the men's assistance. As each arrives she receives her instructions from the hunters. A valley is selected having but one exit, where there seem to be plenty of boulders. The women station themselves in a rough sort of ring all round it, hidden behind the rocks, each one with her skin jacket off and slung over her arm. Mean-

while, the men creep up, and, keeping also under cover, surround the herd, and begin, by the well aimed throwing of first one stone, then another, to drive it off in the direction of the selected ravine, where other hunters are gathered in force with bows and arrows ready.

The deer, still suspecting nothing, move slowly to their fate. Presently one woman, to the rear, and then another, gets up in the open and beats her jacket on the rock behind which she had been hiding. This scares the creatures forward in the right direction, and drives them within the reach of the men. Directly they come within bowshot their doom is sealed. So skilful are the hunters that no man expends more than an arrow apiece on the deer. The whole herd is killed with the greatest celerity.

The carcasses are retrieved and skinned, and immense feasting follows. These manœuvres are repeated day after day throughout the whole season, until the snow begins to appear again on the higher ranges, and the arctic summer is on the wane. Gradually the tribesfolk move off again towards the lower grounds, the south, and the sea, transporting with them huge bundles of invaluable skins and a great quantity of deer hams, until one by one they reach the various points of water where they left and stored their boats on the up-country trip.

There is no general point of assembly on the return journey. Each tribe takes its own course and works its way back towards its own territory un-

accompanied by the others. The women and children get a brief spell of rest when they reach the coast, while the men put in a few days seal hunting, to provision the homeward voyage. Finally, the *umiaks* are launched again and reloaded to the very gunwales; the sails are hoisted, and the fleet draws away through the archipelagoes of the coast to its port of registration!

Not infrequently on one of these big summer hunting expeditions, traces are discovered of a winter deer hunting party which had been overtaken by disaster. The evidences of some tragedy lie there for all to read: the sled torn to pieces, weapons scattered about, small boxes lying here and there, and bones—human, canine or vulpine—all over the place. Hunger, perhaps, overtook the party; sickness followed. Wolves attacked, or the hungry team of dogs got out of hand and tore down the hunters, who were unable successfully to defend themselves. The writer could instance many a savage incident of this description.

In a very similiar district to the one described in the preceding account of the summer hunting, there was a fiord leading up to a landlocked bay, a favourite resort of the white whales. Regularly each year the hunters of the tribes in the vicinity used to go to hunt these creatures with gun and spear, taking splendid hauls of meat back to the camp, and bales of stout hide to be made into thongs, harness, etc. So much flesh and offal was left about on the scene of action that wolves came to infest the entire region. In early

spring the fiord afforded a particularly good sealing ground, being so sheltered from the crashing seas outside.

An Eskimo and his son ventured thither one day, intending to form a camp there for awhile and put in some good hunting. Mile after mile was covered, headland after headland passed, until they were nearing the sealing grounds, when the dogs began to show signs of panic. They could scarcely be got to proceed, no matter how sharply urged by voice and whalehide whip. Nothing moving, however, caught the keen sight of the men; no sound came to their ears. Suddenly, just as they passed another point, a fierce howl rang out on the bitter air, followed by a chorus of more howls, and a large pack of wolves swept out from behind it and came into full view. They had been lying in wait until the sled came up. Their bleached coats had rendered them invisible until they moved.

The hunters at once realised their deadly peril, and turning instantly about, headed at top speed for home. A long fierce chase ensued. There was no need to drive the dogs. They strained every terrified nerve in their bodies and flew over the ice. The wolves rushed on behind. They spread out fanwise, trying to encircle the dogs and cripple them one by one as opportunity offered, by making brilliant forward dashes and slashing with savage fangs at their legs.

The man thrust a sealing spear into the boy's hands and shouted to him to thrust it at any wolf attempting

to attack at close quarters at side or rear, while he himself, armed with the terrible dog whip, lashed out continuously with the courage of despair, and the effectiveness of years of practice. He roared, and swung the murderous thong over the backs of the team, so as to protect it from the attacking wolves, crippling any one of them who ventured within its sweep. As often as one of the bloodthirsty brutes rushed in, it was met with a terrific cut, and fell back howling and disabled.

Hour after hour the awful race went on; until at last, when it seemed even to the hardy and seasoned hunter that neither he nor the wretched dogs could sustain the strain a moment longer, they came in sight of the last headland which hid the settlement from view. A final heroic effort might yet bring them to safety!

With a yell of encouragement to the exhausted son, and renewed vigour in his wielding of the whip, the hunter pressed on. The wolves, realising that their prey was actually escaping, redoubled their efforts to close in upon the sled. It dashed round the point only in the nick of time. The dogs in camp beyond, scenting what was afoot, instantly rushed out to give battle to the wolves. The pack, perceiving that the odds were now heavily against them, snarled viciously, turned coward tails, and vanished. . . .

The refugees arrived in camp in a state of utter collapse. The man's whip arm was swollen beyond further usage, like his tongue, and his voice had gone.

He staggered to his house, and both he and the boy lay there for days before either sufficiently recovered to rise and go about their ordinary work again.

Many a party have been waylaid by wolves like this, and have not had the good fortune to survive. Should there be a shortage of food, resulting in subsequent sickness and weakness among the travellers or hunters, they fall victims very easily to the rapacity of the savage animal denizens of the wild. The male dogs of the teams get killed, and the females join the marauding horde and revert to their wolfish state.

THE SONG OF THE PINTAILED DUCK.

As sung in Competition in the Kagge.

Samane samiyeyiya, iya, neakoa koololotingoâle
 Sigoole kokiglotingoale aglokugle pooarkretingoagle
 Okagle allotingoarkinna ikkoâto kettemalotikogikgoa
 Ookeonne pissorayakattalale ipâ adyelikjolikpanma
 Iya annungmenik ipa sosooktelaneyonele annamane
 Adyegegaloâgoone kattargit nipotenekpategikkoa
 Issungatoot annenarsuarâyakto.

Free Translation of the Song of the Pintailed Duck
in Competition with the Ptarmigan.

“ His head is like a swollen thumb joint,
His beak is like the thumb nail.
His lower beak is like a shovel, and his tongue is
like a spoon.
They come together (the Ptarmigans) in the winter;
They walk together, and make a soft sleeping place
By covering the hard rocks with dung.
But their breasts freeze hard down to this,
They flap their wings,
And try to fly away . . . ”

The singer goes through all the appropriate (if somewhat broad) actions of this bit of burlesque, flapping his arms to ridicule the birds caught fast on the rocks in their own frozen droppings. The Ptarmigan is not slow to respond.

THE SONG OF THE HUNTER.

Panneyukpayiyeyâ â sakkokalemukkoa
Panneyuktarrekâ okeoksaktalimingmat
Samaniyiyeyeya â sakkokalemukkoa
Panneyuktarreka oonarramanna panneyaktarrega
Okeaksaktalemingmat sammiyiyeyiya â
Ipparramanna toosneksaktangmeta innarlo

Sângane samiyiyeyeya â oonaralelidlugolemanaeyâ
Iyuksaktareka innâlo sângane samiyiyeyiyâ â
Kinnalena imnarlo sângane.

Free Translation of the Song of the Hunter :

“ He is preparing his hunting weapons and his
ammuntion.

Mine also are being prepared,

Because it is again autumn.

My spear is prepared, and my seal warp.

Because they catch the sound of my preparing,

Of my placing my spear,

In the front of the high cliffs

The seals have gone away.

Although the face of the high cliffs

Smells of the seals ”

(Understood, yet they have gone away.)

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CREATURES OF THE WILD

BEAR hunting, again, is pursued by the Eskimo with no less zest than that of the seal or deer. It forms quite a subject by itself, and calls for some description of its own customs, methods, and superstitions.

The bear is much respected by the Eskimo for his intelligence and cunning, and his strength. Indeed, they consider him second only, among the creatures of the wild, to man himself. It is for this reason that they so often choose for their “*tongak*,” or guardian familiar, the spirit of a bear.

One very curious belief about the animal is that the bear himself has a *tongak* (quite distinct from his *Tarngnil* or soul), and that when this spirit requires any new commodity, such as a new seal warp or line, which is represented by the black skin round the mouth of its protégé, this *tongak* causes the bear to fall in the hunter’s way and be killed. The hunter spares the black skin, and refrains from cutting it when flaying the carcass, as an offering to the spirit. A further offering of the sort is made by transfixing various portions of the beast’s body and entrails on a stake or spear, together with a man’s implement—

such as a knife, if the bear were a male, or a woman's implement, such as a needle or skin scraper, if it were a female—and exposing the gift for three days. At the end of that time it is thrown into the sea.

In bear hunting, the rule is for the skin to go to the first hunter who sights the prey (not necessarily the first to kill it.) The best part of the body goes to him who deals the fatal blow.

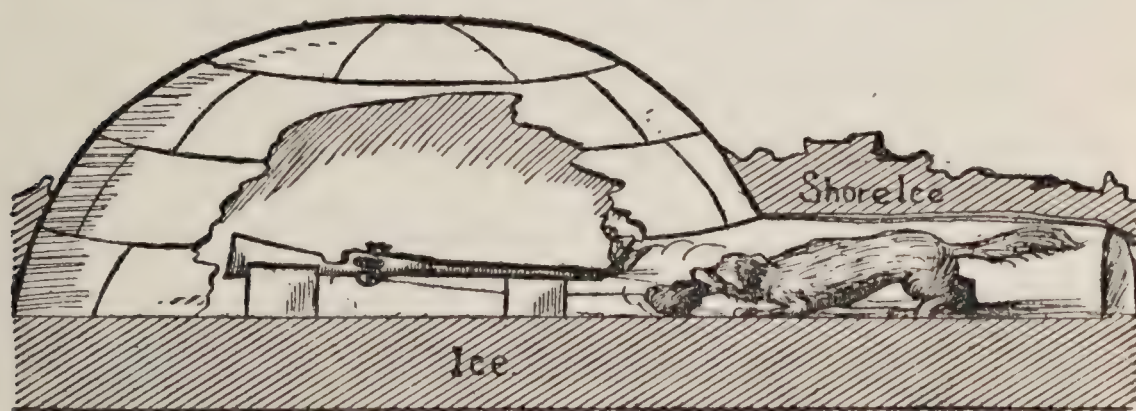
The arctic bear is not an hibernating animal, for it is only the female who sleeps through the winter. The pair hunt together until the approach of winter, when the female, fat, and in the pink of condition after the summer months of good feeding, searches for a suitable place in which to retire and bear her cubs. She generally chooses a sheltered spot on land, where the snow lies deeply drifted. The two partners scratch out a comfortable cave in this, and the female then enters and rolls herself up to sleep. The male bear blocks up the entrance, and the next fall or drift of snow effectively completes his task, and obliterates all traces of the animal's activities. He takes himself off, to roam about at his own sweet will, and attend to nobody's appetite but his own for the next few months, returning to the female only in the spring, when she emerges from her hiding place, gaunt and hungry, and accompanied by the cubs. The male is always the safer creature to hunt at such a season, since the female is then thoroughly out of condition and very savage.

Bears are particularly fond of and feed upon the

blubber of seal and walrus, and resort to many tricks in order to procure it. The older generation of hunters studied the habits of the arctic creatures more carefully than do the Eskimo of to-day, and affirm many interesting things as to the bear's tactics when on the prowl for food. They—the bears—know just as much about seal hunting as the tribesmen know, i.e., that these creatures lie about on the ice in the frozen bays, but are so wary of danger that they plunge out of sight in an instant through their "*agloes*" or seal holes at the slightest alarm. The bear goes nowhere near the sealing ground at first, but makes his way up any slight hill or eminence in the neighbourhood from which he can view the seals, and their adjacent holes. He impresses some sort of a map of it all, and of the safest route towards it, on his mind, and then makes the best haste he can towards the broken ice along-shore. He slides down the snow on his haunches like a tobogganist, carefully avoiding any rocks and obstacles projecting themselves in his path. After that, he creeps along with extraordinary caution towards the first sleeping seal he has marked down. He is all but invisible against the white background, and he is absolutely silent. He just glides towards his victim, and then at the last, when sufficiently close, he rushes forward and kills it with a single blow of his paw.

In the latter part of the spring, when the seal holes have become so enlarged that several of the animals may be making use of the same one, the bear takes

careful note of this fact and adopts a bolder plan of action. He creeps up to any neighbouring hole, examines it, dives down through it, and swims along under the ice towards the place where the seals are congregated. He suddenly pops up through their own particular hole, thus cutting off their retreat, kills them at his leisure, and gorges on their fat.



WOLF TRAP.

The wolves and foxes were trapped by the hunters in the above manner. A small igloo was built in the broken ice along the sea shore where it would not be conspicuous, and a loaded gun fixed pointing to the entrance, which did not allow space for anything but forward movement. A trail of meat led to the entrance, inside of which was a piece of meat (ancient) tied to a string, the other end of the string was attached to the trigger. The wolf entered, seized the meat, and shot himself.

When hunting walrus the bear adopts different tactics. He knows that these creatures are at a great disadvantage on land, but that they love to drag themselves up on to the rocks or shore ice, and lie there asleep or basking in the sun beneath some cliff, and safely screened from their principal enemy—man. When the bear sights a walrus in such a position, he risks no direct attack, but takes careful note of the situation, loads a massive piece of ice or rock upon his shaggy shoulder, and making a cunning détour, works his way to some spot directly behind and above his

intended victim. Then he launches his missile down upon its head. The skull of the walrus is so thick it is almost impossible to smash it; but at least the animal is stunned, and the bear has only to scramble down and complete his work with a blow or two of his paw.

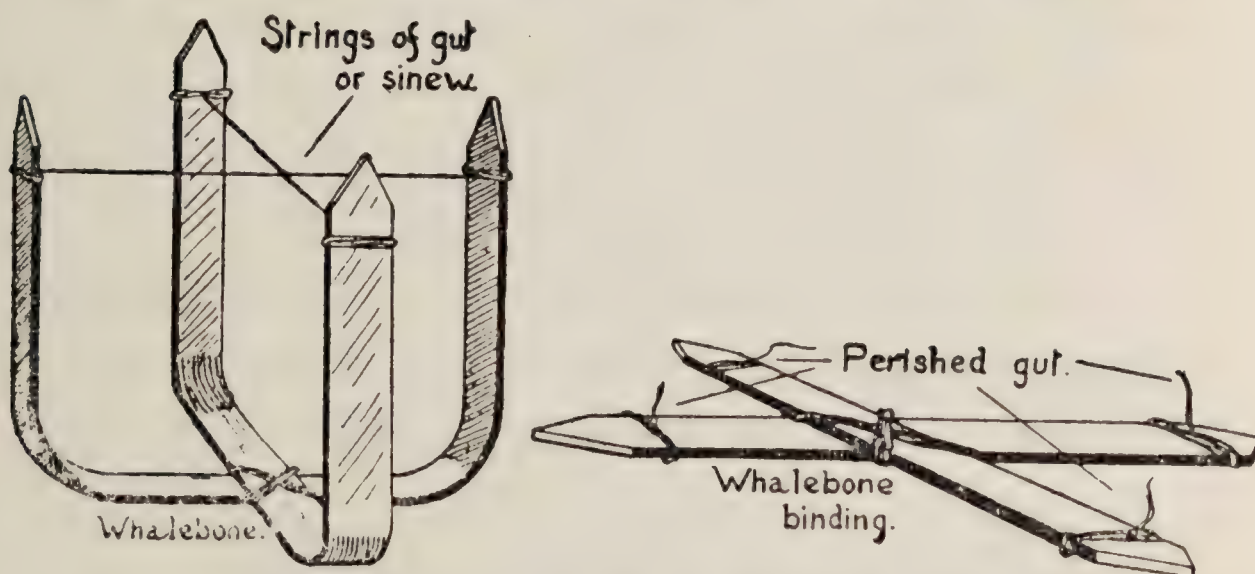
(This method of hunting, incredible though it seems, has been emphatically affirmed by several ancient hunters.)

No wonder the human hunter has conceived the highest respect for the bear, and is anxious to secure his *Tongak* for a familiar spirit!

In the water the walrus is a swift and formidable creature, to capture whom taxes the kyaker's utmost skill and courage. The man has nothing but his spear and drag, i.e., an inflated sealskin attached to his spearhead, by means of which the animal, when transfixed, is prevented from diving too deeply or travelling too fast. As he approaches the walrus, man and beast manœuvre for an opening. The kyaker, keenly on the alert, with a touch of the paddle just keeps his frail craft moving until the other, with a sudden grunt and roar, rushes at him through the water, rearing right up at striking distance, a terrible vision indeed, with huge slavering tusks, eyes bloodshot and glistening with rage . . . The coolest courage is required to face it!

The hunter pauses there for just that fraction of a second until the creature is upon him, then slips aside, and the harpoon drives deep as the animal surges

past. It instantly dives, intending to come up and tear the kyak from beneath. But the drag of the float upon the line checks it and causes it to misjudge the distance, so that when it rises the kyak is not there. Meanwhile, the hunter has easily kept track of the beast's rush under water, by the air bubbles (or by his highly trained instinct), and when its savage head reappears he races up, and strikes it in the face before



AN ESKIMO TRAP FOR BEARS, FOXES OR WOLVES.

This was used before the time of Europeans living in this country. The trap was composed of thin pieces of whalebone with sharpened points bent up and bound at the top by cross strings of gut or sinew, the whole being embedded in a piece of meat and left in the run of animals. The animal swallows the meat and trap. The gut strings dissolved in the stomach and the instrument sprang open as in the accompanying sketch, transfixing the stomach and killing the animal.

it has recovered from its bewilderment. The startled, baffled foe immediately dives again, and remains below the surface as long as possible, only to be driven down once more the instant it emerges for a breath of air.

At last, utterly exhausted and nearly drowned, it comes up the last time and meets its fate at the hands of the plucky and relentless pursuer. Should the

hunter miss his stroke at the first awful attack and fail to get clear, the kyak is instantly overturned and the man savagely mauled in the water, the walrus driving its tusks right through his body time and time again. Or it sometimes seizes the hunter between its flippers and, in full view of the other kyakers, holds him under water, coughing hoarse defiance at them all as they rush up to the rescue; and then slowly submerges, taking its enemy with it. Such are the casualties of arctic life.

One of the very few creatures who seems to have it all his own way in the frozen regions of the north is the raven. He supplies an element of sheer impishness and insouciance in Eskimo life, without which the native might want for a good deal of fun and aggravation.

The bird abounds everywhere. Even in the most bitter and desolate spots the raven turns up in a sufficiently glossy and well nourished condition. His huge beak is a formidable weapon and always stands him in good stead. He is like a spirit of mischief, able to calculate to a hair how near to spear or gun he may with safety venture. He is the despair of men and dogs alike. He is an expert thief, and cannot be excelled in pilfering.

During the day, whilst the hunters are away and there is nothing much doing, the raven sits on a crag or other convenient spot overlooking the village, and with a melancholic and malignant eye broods in disgust. You can almost hear him hoarsely remark :

“What a rotten show! What a poverty-stricken hole! This really is the limit! Not a scrap to filch since daybreak!”

Should you pass by, he brightens up and cocks an eye at you in an expectant way, as though it were the plainest duty of all bipeds to shed scraps and bits for him to enable him to pick up an honest living. Although, as a matter of fact, he much prefers a dishonest one.

Towards evening, there is an air of expectancy about the raven group. They have trimmed themselves up and sharpened their beaks on any stone or pole handy for the purpose. As the hunters begin to put in an appearance the birds move off and entrench themselves behind such cover as the neighbourhood may afford. They know from experience that man is uncertain with his gun, and it may go off unexpectedly with detrimental effects to themselves. Anyhow, they prefer to have a boulder in between.

Presently one bird, sharper-set than the rest, peers from his concealment to see how things are progressing. A croak of disgust at the leaden-footedness of events announces his observations to the rest. But presently a hunter emerges from his house with a bowl of dainties for the dogs (the dainties are more or less putrid), and empties it into a tumultuous crowd of them, when each one vies with his neighbour in catching and bolting as much as possible in the least space of time. At this, there is an ebon rush from

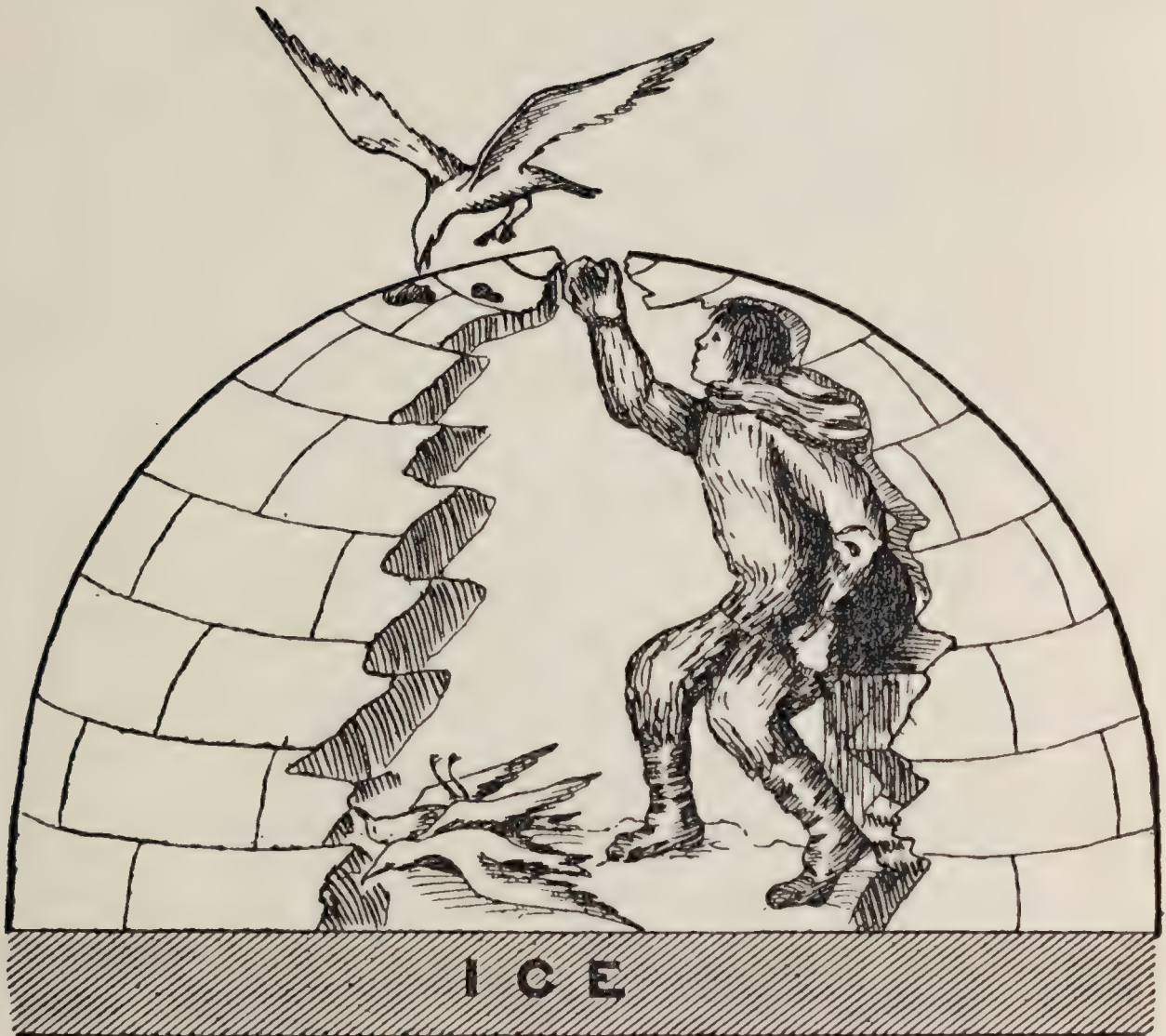
the surrounding crags, and a fierce rear attack upon the dogs from the voracious birds.

A beak like cold steel driven deep into a dog's flank just as he is engulfing a particularly delicious morsel, tends to make him choke. He does so in fact, and his feathered aggressor, striking hard now at his nose, snatches the lump of meat from him in the very act of flapping and floating off to safety in mid air. The dog, disgusted and disappointed beyond expression, sits down and howls maledictions on thieves in general and ravens in particular, to the remotest of their generations.

No one loves the raven. The hunter uses every art to catch him, but generally in vain. He will set out early of a winter's morning with a supply of the most cunning traps he can contrive, and of the most tempting bait. Nothing is in sight as he leaves the camp. When he reaches the trapping grounds he sets a line of fox traps in all the most likely places, and carefully conceals his work with snow. But his every movement has been 'cutely watched, and as soon as his back is turned there comes an amused and contemptuous croak, as who should say: "What an ass! Do you suppose I'm not equal to *that*?"

The croaker spreads bold wings and sails over to the trap. Inserting his bill beneath it like a lever, he simply wrests it over and so springs it. In a trice he tweaks out the bait and bolts it. He makes a point of being there on the hunter's return in the evening, just to hear his remarks. The bird has the audacity

indeed to sit there, close by, his head upon one side and a bored expression in his eye, as though he were reflecting on the pitiable amateurishness of the whole affair.



A SEAGULL TRAP.

The skins of these birds are used for socks, which go over the fur stocking and inside the boot to prevent the cold striking through to the foot. The old hunters build a small *igloo* amid the broken ice of the sea shore, leaving a hole in the top. Pieces of blubber are scattered outside to attract the gulls, who alight by the side of the hole and are caught by their legs and dragged inside. The flesh is eaten.

“What!” he seems to say. “You call that a snare? And you think you’re eloquent about it now! Why, if it comes to that, I could make your hair stand on end with the force and aptness of my remarks!”

With a hoarse, derisive note, he rises then and wheels off into the arctic empyrean.

The gulls, on the other hand, come well within the category of those creatures whom the Eskimo hunter can outwit. These birds are always much in demand, both as food and for the sake of their skins, which latter, turned inside out, make capital socks. The old men spend a good deal of their time in winter, catching gulls.

The hunter builds himself a small *igloo* among the rough ice by the seashore, and creeps inside. He proceeds to cut a hole in the top just big enough for the passage of a bird's body, and round this opening, on the outside, he spreads attractive bits of seal meat and blubber. Then he prepares to wait. Presently a gull, sweeping by on the endless search for food, spies these dainties, and descrying no sign of foe or danger, swoops ever nearer and nearer, until at last it alights on top of the *igloo* for a brief second, seizes a morsel and wheels off again. Nothing untoward having occurred, the bird grows bolder, returns, and finally settles down to the feast outspread in that tempting spot.

Suddenly a hand comes up and grips it by the legs, and drags it downwards through the hole. Another hand slides up its body to its neck, so that it cannot fight or bite, and in a moment or two the life is choked out of it. Bird after bird is caught in this way, until at the end of the day the hunter returns to the village under a load of white and grey feathers. He laughs

delightedly to think how he has tricked the greedy gulls, and how his cunning bird-calls have deceived one after another.

He recounts the story of it all over the cooking pot into which the birds are thrown as soon as skinned, and keeps his women-folk well entertained as they sit chewing the skins to pliability in their strong white teeth, for the rest of the arctic evening.

Such is a glimpse into the lives of these brave and hardy warriors of the North, a country which they love. Fierce and relentless though it be, it brings out all the best that is in them. All honour and praise to them.

APPENDIX

ESKIMO DEITIES

Sedna. Goddess of sea animals, but not of the sea itself.

Ooluksâk. God of the lakes. He lives by the side of the lakes, and it is by his instrumentality that the conjurors get their light when performing their rites.

Tekkitserktok. God of the land. He owns all deer. This god is greater in power than all the other gods. Offerings are made to this god by hunters before going inland for the annual deer hunt.

Kingoatseak. This god lives in the sea and is like a dog in appearance; legs very thin like a dog's. Is not able to come to the surface.

Sinnilktok. Lives on the land. One side of this god is like a woman, one side like a dog. It is a benevolent spirit, gives seals to the conjurors and cures the sick, but is very much afraid of Eskimos and dogs.

Keekut. Lives on land and is like a dog without hair. Is an evil spirit, and does evil of various kinds.

Segook. This spirit has a head like a crow and a body like a human being, and is black, and has wings. It does good and brings meat to the Eskimos in its beak. It eats the eyes of deer and seals.

Tekkonatelik. A spirit living on land, with a body like a fox, fiery eyes, red hair. Benevolent in disposition.

Eeyeekadluk. Lives on land. In appearance like a short man with fairly large eyes, black face, very short legs, eyes frightful to look upon. Lives in a stone *igloo*. Good spirit, tries to cure the sick.

Mummerreak. Lives on land. Like an Eskimo, masc. gender, but has his hair dressed like a woman, and his skin clothes have no hair upon them. Good spirit; is helpful by heaving rocks at the deer and killing them. The deer are then found by the Eskimos.

Angootelooktook. Lives on land. Like a man in appearance. His thighs are crippled and he wobbles whilst walking. Benevolent spirit; keeps close to the conjurors and pays heed to his incantations.

Nooesarnak. Lives on land. In appearance like a woman with thin legs. Is clothed like a woman, in deerskins. Has a deerskin mask. Benevolent spirit; always wishes to give deerskins to the people.

Toodlanak. Lives on land. Like a woman in appearance. Is a great walker, and walks about with bedding and *tupik* (tent) on her back, as the people do when on journey inland. She has no husband. Has a nice, pleasant face, and wears long boots. She is a good spirit and gives deer to the Eskimo, i.e., drives them within their reach.

Aipalookvik. This spirit is malevolent and lives on the sea bottom. Has a large head and face, human in appearance, but ugly like a cod's. Is a destroyer by desire, and tries to bite and eat the kyakers (canoemen).

Akktonakjuvoonga, or Akktonakjuak. Live under the sea. Are very thin in appearance and like Eskimo. They congregate and cry to each other, "*Shevarktonakjoovoonga*," the others replying, "*Shevarktonakjoovtit* (I am a rope. Reply : Thou art a rope).

Ogjunak. Lives on land. Like an Eskimo in appearance, one side black, one side white. Has European clothes. Face covered with hair, thin legs, arms and body. Good spirit; tries to cure sick.

Koopvilloarkju. Lives on land. Like a small Eskimo man. Has orange coloured hair and orange coloured clothes. Good spirit; said to give food and heal the sick.

Ooleooyenuk. Lives by the side of the sea. Like a man in appearance, his clothes made with lapels and scallops. Eats seaweed. Good spirit.

Aulanerk. Lives in the sea. Like a stout man. Is naked, writhes about and makes waves. Is a source of joy to the Eskimo.

Naput. Lives on land. Like an Eskimo; is very thin, cannot walk, but jumps and stands upright. He is never angry, and classed as a good spirit.

Angemenooat. Lives on land. Is like a woman, very thin, almost like a skeleton, and has a string round her waist like a

woman who is carrying a child. Has very large clothes and a benevolent mind.

Ookomark. On land. Like a short, thin man; very large, round face, a stout body. Is very strong, and is dangerous if seen by mortals. Lives in a stone house and kills animals with stones. (Not benevolent; temper uncertain; needs careful handling.)

Oovineroolik=Those who were flesh. (These are the spirits of departed Europeans.) Lives on land; clothed in a shirt; like a European in appearance. Has a boat and hunts seals. Is captain of three boats, two of which are manned by other departed Europeans. When boats are full, meat given to the Eskimo. Very good spirits.

Isserootaitok. (Also spirit of departed European.) Lives on land; like a European in appearance. Wears a jacket with no buttons. Always arrives from a distance; has no boat, but tries to do good.

Nessallogainalik. Lives on land. Has no clothes, but wears a hat. Is like a European; generally sleeps on a ship; is supposed to be the spirit of a departed sailor.

Oyakkert. This spirit is an Innook and not a Tongak. It lives in small stones; in appearance like an Eskimo. Has a very red face, black body and legs; is very thick and heavy. Only seen by conjurors. Has no attributes.

Koodjânuuk. First-class spirit. When the world was made he was a very large bird with black head and hooked beak, white body. Lived on the boundary of the earth. Is a benevolent spirit; a trifle blasé through age. Has the ability to give, and does so when asked by the conjurors; also heals sick.

Poolaiyittok. Lives on land, by the side of the lakes. Like a woman in appearance. Is accompanied by a dog like a white fox. Is a good spirit and does good when asked.

Bokoomeerlekuluk. Lives on the sea bottom. Like a fox in appearance, with fur, black in colour; but head and face like an Eskimo, with two tusks, which are used for cleaning purposes and for killing seals, which are given to the Eskimo.

Kalluktok. Lives on land and on ice. Like an Eskimo, dwarf in size. He has dogs and a sled, and is a good hunter. Gives meat to the people. Is very swift with his sled.

- Kulaktok.* Lives on land in a *tupik* (skin tent). Like an old woman, and is the mother of Kalluktok. She is always cooking, because her son is a good hunter. She constantly gives food to her Tongak friends.
- Kallooetok.* Lives on land. Is father to Kalluktok and husband of Kullaktok. Is a bad hunter because his eyes are bad. He is very old and does not go hunting, but has good intentions to the Eskimo.
- Tooktooak.* Lives on land. In appearance like a very tall and thin Eskimo; hair white and clothing black, with no hair upon it. He is a good spirit in intention.
- Koodjaunuk.* Lives at the bottom of the sea. Like an Eskimo. Wears no clothes and is very thin. He is not one to be feared, as his intentions are good, and comes to the surface when called by the conjuror.
- Toonekotario.* This one lives on land. It is the spirit of one of the departed Tooneet. Carries a bone harpoon and comes as often as invoked.
- Aumanil.* Lives on land. Has a black face with fiery eyes. His mouth, eyes and nostrils are very much distended when invoked by the conjuror. He guides whales.
- Nootaitok.* The spirit of the Icebergs. He lives in the sea. Like an Eskimo. Wears black skin clothes; has bright eyes. Is a good spirit and gives seals when invoked.
- Adjarkpaluk.* Lives on land. Is like a European, and wears European clothing. When invoked, will come from afar. He has a good mind and does no harm.
- Tooloreak.* Lives on land. Is like an Eskimo. Has large canine teeth like a bear; wears bearskin trousers, and the rest of his clothing of skin without hair. Black in colour. Does not wear boots, but has feet covered with hair. He is a good spirit and comes when called and gives as desired.
- Agloolik.* He lives beneath the ice like an ogjuk (large seal). He is the guardian spirit of the seal holes. He gives seals to the hunters and is considered a good spirit.
- Akselloak.* This is the spirit of the rocking stones. When called he arrives rolling, and when near the conjuror he falls flat upon his face. He is considered a good spirit.
- Tootegâ.* Like a small woman. Lives on an island in a stone house. She is able to walk upon the sea.

Ataksâk. Lives in the sky. He is like a ball in appearance. He has the means of joy within himself, thus he is the joy-giver. He comes to the Eskimo as often as he is invoked by the conjuror. He has many strings of charms on his clothing. These charms are very bright, and as he moves about his body is also bright. He arrives to the people as a ball of light and causes the people to be joyful, through the conjuror. He is considered good.

Kingmingoarkulluk. He lives on land and is like a very small Eskimo. When seen he is always singing with joy: "Kingmingoarkulloona, aiya, samaiya." (He is always singing that he is Kingmingoarkulluk.) The name is derived from a plant called Kingmingoark. He is of a good disposition and does good generally.

Ooyarraksakju. She lives in the big stones, hence her name: the beautiful material for stone. She is like a large woman in appearance, lives on various things; gives various good things to the Eskimo.

Ooyarrauyamitok. Has no definite abode. Is sometimes on earth, sometimes in Heaven. In appearance is like a middle-aged Eskimo. Is frequently invoked by the conjurors when incanting. This god, if invoked and respected, gives meat to the Eskimo, i.e., enables them to get it.

Koodloorktaklik. He lives far inland and is like a man, and does not wish to be seen by the Eskimo. He is bright and clean in appearance. He does good to the sick, and in various other ways. He generally has the ends of deer hoofs attached to his clothing, hence his name.

Kakkakotauyak. Lives on land. Is like a dog in appearance; whitish in colour. His eyes and nose are black. He is not dangerous, even if seen. Has amiable characteristics, and sends seals and deer to the Eskimo.

Sillaseak. Lives inland, and is like a man. He never goes on the ice. He lives in a house under the earth. He gives deer to the Eskimo when deer-hunting.

Kattakju. Lives on land and is like an old woman in appearance and is very tall. She presides by the sick when the conjuror tests them by head or leg lifting, and reveals their state and chances of recovery to the conjuror.

Niksiglo. This god lives under the earth, and is like one with a hook with a line attached. In appearance he is like a

walrus tusk. Is a Tongâk and a bad character. He steals the hunters' deer and seals by hooking them. He is seen only by conjurors, if seen at all. There are many of these tongâk, and if seen stealing by a conjuror, the aid of another conjuror is called in. The spirits of these two search for the thief; the one watching from above, the spirit of the other goes below, and from a small house beneath the dwelling of the tongâk he is able to see the thief and kill him.

Angalootarlo.—Is another tongâk and a bad character. He is a great thief, and has two personalities; is like a large bearded seal when in the sea, and like an Eskimo when on the ice. He is frightful in appearance and works in the following manner: When an Eskimo is alone at sea in his kyak, this tongâk, keeping the appearance of a seal, swims away from land and is followed by the kyaker. When a long distance from land, the tongâk gets upon a piece of ice and the kyaker, having no gun, follows to kill him, still thinking it is a seal. Then, when the hunter draws near, the tongâk changes his shape into that of an Eskimo, and kills the hunter, he having no gun and being very near.

Pukkeenegak. Lives on land, and is like a small woman, with face tattooed. She has her hair done up into a knot on the top of her head, like the Greenlanders. She has very large boots (*kummeek*) made from the deer legs, and has very nice clothes. Is quite aristocratic. She is considered to be good, as she gives food, material for clothes, and babies, to the Eskimo women.

Toodlayoeetok, also *Pissukyongnangetok*. Has his abode in Heaven. Is like an Eskimo, but cannot walk, hence his name: he who is unable to walk. He sits on a small sled and propels himself along by two sticks. He is considered a good deity. He catches animals by lassoing them, and then gives them to the Eskimo.

Orkshualik. Lives on land ice.

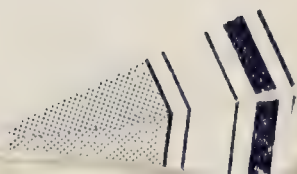
Map for "Among Unknown Eskimo."



Scale: 75 Statute miles to 1 inch = 1:4,752,000.

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INDEX.

- AGED, the respect for, 140, 236.
Amateur Surgery, 25.
Ancient Dwellings, 82.
Angakooet or conjurors, 76, 93, 136, 160, 196, 209, 211, 214,
223, 225, 230, 234.
Arctic animals, 52, 252, 263.
— Birds, 50, 51.
— Explorers, 17, 21, 32, 33.
— Flowers, 37, 38.
Astronomy, 44.
Autumn, 42, 45.
- BAFFIN Bay, 21.
Baffin Land, 20, 23, 32.
— Dimensions, 33.
— Geology, 35.
— Scenery, 36.
— Vegetation, 37, 40.
Baffin, William, 18, 33.
Bears, 52, 92, 98, 164, 253.
— Hunting, 252, 254.
— Hunting methods of, 254, 256
Behring Strait, 21.
Birds, 50, 51.
Birth-rate, 67.
Blankets, 74.
Blow-holes, 86, 87.
Blubber, 82, 97.
Boat-building, 112, 114.
Bompass, Bishop, 25.
Boothia, Gulf of, 33.
Boots, 109, 110.

Bruce, Prof. W. S., 25, 38.

Building, 75, 77.

Butterflies, 49.

Bylot, 18.

CANNIBALISM, 103, 104.

Characteristics of the Eskimo, 68, 135, 138, 206.

Charms, 234.

Cheerfulness, 86.

Childbirth, 158, 160.

Children, 144, 158, 239.

Civilization, dangers of, 137.

Clothing, 73, 108, 110, 112.

Coal, 35.

Communism, 137, 140, 222.

Conjurors, 76, 93, 136, 160, 196, 209, 211, 214, 223, 225, 230,
234.

— payment of, 234.

— training of, 197, 198.

Cooking, 98.

— utensils, 74.

DAVIS, John, 18.

Day's work, the, 85.

Death, 165.

— customs, 166, 168, 170, 204.

Deer, 40, 41, 52.

— hunting, 48, 147, 237, 240, 245.

Deities, 209, 265, 270.

Deserted snow-houses, 84.

Dialects, 173.

Disposition of tribes, 62.

Dog-boots, 122.

Dogs, 119, 120, 135.

— feeding, 127, 128, 259.

— training, 120, 121, 124.

Domestic implements, 97, 98, 108.

— work, 97.

Dundee whaling fleet, 22.

Dwellings of ancient inhabitants, 82.

- EARLY Arctic exploration, 17, 21, 32, 33.
Education, 144, 145.
— of conjurors, 197, 198.
— of girls, 74.
Egede, Hans, 172.
Employes, Eskimo, 137.
Ermine, 52.
Eskimo, 30, 34, 57, 59, 65, 66, 135, 137, 138, 206.
— of Labrador, 135.
— astronomy, 44.
— dogs, 119-135.
— history, 58, 59.
— hospitality, 46, 100, 101, 161.
— language, 171, 178, 183.
— maps, 70, 71.
— numerical strength, 61.
— origin, 60, 61.
— tribes, 62, 240.
— war with Norsemen, 67.
— women, 97, 98, 102, 145, 158, 160.
Exploration, early Arctic, 17, 21, 32, 33.
- FARRAR, Dean, 173.
Fatalism, 228.
Fauna, 40, 41, 52, 252, 263.
Firesticks, 102.
Flemming, Rev. A. L., 113.
Flora, 37, 38, 40.
Folk-lore, 104, 105, 183, 195.
Fossils, 48.
Foxes, 52, 93.
Franklin, Sir John, 20, 21.
Freezing of salt water, 42.
Frobisher, shipwreck of, 19.
Funeral customs, 165, 166.
- GAMES, 144, 217, 240, 241.
Geology, 35.
Government agents, 69.

Grammar, 172, 179, 180.

Grampus, 54.

Granite, 35.

Graphite, 35.

Greenland, 18, 38.

Grinnell Land, 38.

Gulf Stream, 47.

Gulls, 262, 263.

HAIR-DRESSING, 111.

Harness, 133.

Heaven, 207.

Hell, 167, 170, 207.

Heroism, 96.

History, 57, 58, 59.

Housewives, 74.

Hospitality, 46, 83, 100, 101, 161.

Hostility to white men, cause of, 68.

Hovelaque, M., 174.

Hudson Bay Fur Trading Company, 20, 23, 29.

Hudson, Henry, 18, 21.

Humour, 242, 244.

Hunting, 85, 87, 88, 90, 92, 235, 249, 256, 257.

— dangers of, 246, 258.

Hypnotism, 196, 199, 200, 215.

ICE, 26, 27, 28, 42, 117.

Icebergs, 28, 29.

Ice-rafts, 117.

Igloo or snowhouses, 72, 76, 78.

Illness, 207, 225.

Improvvidence, 103.

Infanticide, 143.

Infants, method of carrying, 109.

Inland sea, traces of, 48.

Interior, 37.

Ironstone, 35.

JOURNEYS, preparation for, 147, 236, 246.

Justice, summary, 139, 140.

KAGGE or singing house, 217, 243.

Kettles, 74.

Kummotik or heavy sled, 132, 236.

Kyak, 112, 113, 114, 256, 257.

— management of, 113, 115.

LABRADOR, Eskimo of, 135.

Lakes, 51.

Lamps, 74, 81.

Language, 171, 183.

— agglutinative character of, 178.

— of spirits, 166, 167.

— system of writing, 175.

Laws and customs, 140-141.

Legends, 183, 195.

Lemming, 53, 83.

Letters, Eskimo, 176.

MAPS, 70, 71.

Marine life, 48.

Marriage customs, 142, 155, 156, 158, 162, 213, 214.

Mask, conjurors', 211.

Meals, 100, 132, 143.

Migration of birds, 50.

Miocene Period, 39.

Miracles, 202, 230.

Morals, 142, 204.

Moravian missions, 183.

Marrett, Dr, 194.

Mosquito, 49.

— death from, 50.

Moss, 39, 147.

Mountain lakes, 47, 48.

Musk-ox industry, proposed, 136.

NAMES, 144.

— of seasons, 46.

— of deities, 265, 270.

Nandla, the blind huntsman, 150, 153.

Nanook, the Great Bear, 44.

Nansen, Fridtjof, 183.

— on the Arctic summer, 36.

— on the Eskimo, 65.

Narwhal, the, 55.

Norsemen, war with, 67.

Northern lights, 45.

North-west passage, 17, 20, 21.

— discovery of, 21.

OCCULTISM, 196, 197, 200, 215.

Oil, 74, 97.

— a common error about, 111.

Ooloo, or knife, 108, 113.

Operation, an amateur surgical, 25.

— a native, 227.

Oral tradition, 59.

Origin of Eskimo, 61.

Ornaments, personal, 110.

PACK ice, 26, 27.

Paddles, 115, 116.

Parry, Captain, 20, 70.

Peace and plenty, 146, 147.

Pintailed duck, song of, 249, 250.

Pleistocene period, 58.

Poetry, 241.

Polar-bears, 164, 253, 254.

Polygamy, 142, 203.

Poppy, yellow, 37.

Primitive barter, 63.

Primitive peoples, pacific nature of, 69.

Ptarmigans and ducks, contest of, 242, 244.

Purple-sandpiper, the, 50.

Purgatory, 207.

Pyrites, 35.

RAVENS, 50, 258, 260.

Raw meat, 132.

Recuperative powers, 226.
Red fox, 51.
Red Indians, 67.
Reindeer, 40, 41, 52, 244, 245.
— moss, 39, 147.
Religion, 205, 206, 207, 265, 270.
Respect for the old, 140, 236.
Richardson, 20.
Ross, Commander Sir John, 20, 21, 23, 70.

SACRIFICE, human, 193.
Sails, 238.
Salmon-trout, 47.
Salt water, freezing of, 42.
Sandpiper, 50.
Sanitation, lack of, 81.
Scurvy, 25.
Sea unicorn, 55.
Seals, 52, 87, 88, 90, 91, 235, 236.
— hunting, 85, 87, 88, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95.
— by bears, 90, 91, 255, 256.
— oil, 74, 82, 97.
Seasons, 41.
Sedna, 167, 208.
— legend of, 184, 187, 193.
— ceremony of, 210, 223.
Sense of danger, 94.
Seorapik, story of, 149.
Servants, Eskimo as, 137, 138.
Sewing-thread, 111, 114.
Sex equality, 102.
Singing, 183, 217, 220, 242, 243.
— houses, 217, 243.
Sinniktâkvik or temporary snowhouse, 82.
Skins, the preparation of, 99, 113, 236, 237.
Sleds, 118, 131, 132, 133.
— ancient form of, 134.
— harness, 133.

- Sleeping benches, 78, 143.
Snow bunting, 50.
Snowhouses, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82.
Social habits, 99.
Socks, 109, 262.
Souls of inanimate objects, 205.
Spears, 114.
Spirits, 165, 166, 193, 207, 252, 253.
— language of, 167.
Spring in the Arctic, 43, 235.
Stockings, 109.
Stone-age, 57.
Storm, an arctic, 94, 95.
Strangers, treatment of, 46, 161.
Suicide of the aged, 149.
Sukso or porch, 78.
Summer, 44, 145, 146, 238, 240.
Superstitions, 145, 159, 165, 168, 169, 184, 194, 195, 215, 230, 233.
Supreme spirit, the, 206.
Surgery, amateur, 25.
— native, 224.
Syllabic characters, 175, 176, 178.
- TAILOR, an Eskimo, 110.
Tents, or tupiks, 72, 73, 74.
Thread, 111, 114.
Tongak, or spirits, 165, 193, 207, 252.
Toodlânak, story of, 105, 106.
Tooneet or ancient inhabitants, 64, 65, 82.
Trapping, 261-262.
Travelling, 133, 163, 239.
Trial, an Eskimo, 139.
Tribal intercourse, 62.
— life, 136, 170.
Tribes, disposition of, 62.
Tug of war, 217.
Tupik, 72, 73, 74.

- UMIAKS or heavy boats, 116, 117, 237, 238, 246.
Unicorn, sea, 55.
Unwritten law, 140.
- VILLAGES, 72, 83.
Voluntary starvation, 103.
- WALRUS, 55, 255, 256.
Water, 98.
Weapons, 114, 115, 245.
Wedding party, an ill-fated, 164.
Whales, 54, 134, 246.
Whale-bone sled, 133.
Whalers, Scottish, 22, 24.
Wick, lamp, 97.
Windows, 79.
Winter, 45, 46.
Winter-quarters, 75, 78, 81.
Wolves, 40, 52.
— their hunting methods, 53.
— attacks by, 246, 247, 248.
Women, 67, 81, 89, 100, 102, 158, 160.
Writing, 175.

FAUNA AND FLORA OF BAFFIN LAND.

FAUNA.

- Bears, 49, 52, 92, 164, 253, 256.
Black fox, 52.
Blue fox, 52.
Bunting, snow, 50.
Butterflies, 49.
Deer, 40, 41, 52, 147, 237, 240.
Eagles, 50.
Eider, 50.
Foxes, 51, 93.
Gulls, 51, 262, 263.

Harlequins, 50.
Hawks, 50.
King eider, 50.
Lemming, 52, 53, 83.
Mosquitoes, 49, 50.
Owls, 50.
Petrels, 51.
Pintail ducks, 50.
Polar bears, 49, 52, 92, 164, 253, 256.
Ptarmigan, 50.
Purple sandpiper, 50.
Ravens, 50, 258, 260.
Red fox, 51.
Reindeer, 40, 41, 52, 147, 237, 240.
Seal, 51, 57, 87, 88, 90, 235, 255.
Skuas, 51.
Snow mouse, 52, 53, 83.
Snow bunting, 50.
Swans, wild, 50.
White fox, 52.
Wolves, 40, 52, 54, 55, 246, 248.

FLORA.

Bladder campion, 38.
Blaeberry, 38.
Buttercup, 38.
Cotton-grass, 38.
Moss, 39, 40, 147.
Papaver radicum, 37.
Potentilla, 38.
Purple saxifrage, 37.
Reindeer moss, 37, 38, 40, 147.
Rock-rose, 38.
Saxifraga oppositifolia, 37.
Scurvy grass, 38.
Willow, arctic, 38.
Yellow poppy, 37.

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